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EDITED BY ERNEST RHYS.

DOUGLAS JERROLD.

THE HANDBOOK OF SWIND-
LING, AND OTHER PAPERS,
BY DOUGLAS JERROLD. EDITED,
WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY
WALTER JERROLD.

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DOUGLAS JERROLD.

TOWARDS the close of last century a Mr. Samuel Jerrold, a theatrical manager getting on in years, married, at Wirksworth, in Derbyshire, as his second wife, a lady considerably younger than himself, by name Miss Reid. The issue of this marriage was four children—first two daughters and then two sons—the youngest of whom was the subject of this note.

“From his mother, who was of Scotch descent on the maternal side, undoubtedly he derived that feverish energy which made him dash at every object he sought; as, from his father, a weak, pensive, thoughtful, old man, he borrowed that tender poetic under-current that flowed through every thought he set upon paper for the world’s judgment. But chiefly to my grandmother (Reid), I have always heard, and have always from my own observation thought, he owed the marked elements of his character;—and the strong constitution, and the peculiar cast of countenance that were his.”¹

Douglas William Jerrold was born in London on January 3rd, 1803. His name, Douglas, was given him after his

¹ *The Life and Remains of Douglas Jerrold*, by his son, Blanchard Jerrold. 1858.

grandmother, whose maiden name it had been. While yet an infant in arms he was taken to Wilsby, near Cranbrook, in Kent, where Samuel Jerrold's theatrical company was at the time engaged. It was, however, only Douglas's very early years that were spent in the health-giving climate and quietude of rural Kent, for when he was four years old his father became lessee of the Sheerness Theatre, and, shortly afterwards, of the Southend Theatre also. To Sheerness, then, the family removed, and the quiet pastoral surroundings of Cranbrook were exchanged for the life and turmoil of a busy seaport, Sheerness being at that time a centre of great naval activity. It was here, amid much that was probably deciding the bent of his genius, that Douglas Jerrold passed the impressionable period of his childhood. The family theatre (on the boards of which, while yet a young child, he was carried by Edmund Kean in the character of *Rolla*) was mainly supported by the officers and men from the various men-of-war repairing, or waiting orders, at the port. Jerrold early evinced a dislike to the theatre from "behind the scenes," and, being of a keenly imaginative temperament, was as early fired, by the stories of naval glory that reached his ears, with an ambition to become a sailor, that he might bear his part in the struggle which was then going on against the dominating influence of the great Napoleon. It was doubtless the air of Jingoism (if the term be permissible in referring to the early part of the century) that surrounded his boyhood which made Jerrold, in after years, give expression to such sentiment as

that in his retort to a friend who was expatiating on the new Treaty between England and France. "Tut, tut!" said Jerrold, "the best thing that I know between England and France is—the sea."

It was at Sheerness that Douglas Jerrold received such scant schooling as he was destined to have. An actor, by name Wilkinson, who in after years was to do his young friend a good service of no insignificant kind, was engaged to teach him reading and writing. After a few months Wilkinson left to join another company, and Douglas was sent to school, where he remained about four years. Gessner's *Death of Abel* and *Roderick Random* are named as among his early readings. His ambition seemed in a fair way toward being realised when, on December 22, 1813 (he was not quite eleven years of age), he joined the navy, being entered a first-class volunteer on board the *Namur*,¹ the guardship at the Nore. Captain (afterwards Admiral) Austen (brother of the well-known novelist) was a good, kindly-natured man, who allowed the youthful officer many privileges; he was permitted to keep pigeons on board, and, still more valuable privilege, was given the run of such a library as the captain's cabin contained. Here he came across and eagerly read *Buffon's Natural History*, the subject being one which always had a peculiar attraction for him, and which, as will be seen at once in his writings, furnished him with many happy or humorous similes and

¹ It may be of interest to mention that the *Namur* had been earlier in the command of Captain Boscawen, "Old Dreadnought," as he was affectionately nicknamed by the sailors.

allusions. Pet pigeons, *Buffon*, and a kind captain notwithstanding, Jerrold chafed at the monotony of life on the guardship, and thirsted for a more active rôle. About a year after joining the *Namur* he was, at his own request, transferred to the brig *Ernest*, which vessel was engaged in conveying transports laden with soldiers destined to take part in the Battle of Waterloo, that

“First and last of fields ! king-making victory !”

The *Ernest* was also employed in bringing home maimed and wounded soldiers from the Continent. None of the wild excitement and exhilaration of action, such as he had dreamed of, fell to Jerrold's lot, while the disgusting sight of torn and gashed humanity in the cockpit of the *Ernest* burned itself indelibly into his mind, and was vividly recalled in after years whenever war was discussed, and made him always one of the most uncompromising opponents of war. Of war, that is, prosecuted for the sake of glory or aggrandisement ; for he fully recognised, of course, that there are cases in which war is not only defensible but righteous. The following, from one of his “leaders,” sums up his position on this matter :—“War is a folly so profound—even now—that an appeal to the sword, unless it be in defence of life or something dearer still than life—honour, liberty, civilisation—is little less than an act of insanity.”¹

¹ “Other Times,” being Liberal leaders from *Lloyd's*. Note also in this volume, “The Folly of the Sword,” p. 173, and passages scattered throughout Jerrold's writings.

It was in April 1821 that Jerrold was transferred to the *Ernest*; in June Waterloo was fought; peace was not long in being arranged, and in October the *Ernest* was paid off, and Midshipman Jerrold stepped ashore.

The Jerrold family left Sheerness shortly after the peace, and reached London on the 1st of January 1816. The new home was set up in Broad Court, Bow Street, whence Douglas made a fresh start in life as a printer's apprentice. Six years of hard work in connection with the printing office were to be gone through before he could (and he had then but scarce attained his majority) adopt literature as his all-supporting crutch. During this period (1816-1824), by dint of indomitable energy, Jerrold made up for his lack of school learning; he would rise at daybreak that he might prosecute the various studies he had decided upon, and on returning home in the evening he would continue at his self-imposed task late into the night. Thus was a knowledge gained of Latin, French, and Italian; and at the same time he got through a vast amount of that "miscellaneous reading" which is so necessary to the would-be man of letters. The novels by the then unknown "Author of 'Waverley'" were delighting the reading world at the time, and Jerrold in after years would tell how he had borrowed the volumes, one by one, from a lending library, and read them aloud to his father. It was shortly after coming up to London, too, that he came across the plays of Shakespeare. He had doubtless seen some of them earlier on the boards of the Sheerness theatre; he now, however, read them all—read them, too, so thoroughly that

he was said to be able, on any line from the plays being quoted, to follow on with the next. His acquaintance with, and his delight in, the work of the "Sweet Swan of Avon" are exemplified in many ways—in papers such as "Shakespeare in China," "Shakespeare at Bankside," "Epitaph on Sir Hugh Evans," and others, in this volume and elsewhere, we have evidence of it.

While working as a printer, and studying to prepare himself for his life-work, Douglas Jerrold was also occasionally trying his hand at various kinds of writing—the inevitable verses in the literary ephemera of the time, short sketches, and, more significant still, he had already written a piece for the stage. This was written when he was but fifteen, in fulfilment of a promise made to Wilkinson, the actor before mentioned. The piece—"More Frightened than Hurt"—met with no uncommon fate; it was sent in to the manager of the English Opera House, and only after much trouble, and the lapse of two years, did the youthful author succeed in getting his MS. back. In 1821, however, Wilkinson was engaged at Sadlers' Wells Theatre, and he made it a condition of his engagement that his young friend's piece should be produced there. It was brought out on April 30th, and proved highly successful; indeed, which must have been very gratifying to its author, it was translated into French, seen in Paris by an English manager, who, knowing nothing of its origin, translated it back, and produced it at the Olympic Theatre. Thus started Douglas Jerrold's career as a dramatic writer. No less interesting is the story of his start as a

miscellaneous writer. He was engaged as compositor on the *Sunday Monitor*. Being impressed with a performance of *Der Freischütz*, he wrote a critical paper on it, and dropped it, anonymously, into his editor's letter-box. His delight may easily be imagined when his own criticism was handed to him the next morning to be set up in all the importance of type, along with a line from the editor to the unknown writer asking for further contributions. Not long afterwards, and while he was yet a compositor in the printing office of the paper, the *Monitor's* dramatic criticisms were entrusted to him.

The "composing stick" was, however, before long to give way finally to the pen, for in 1824 Jerrold felt sufficiently confident of his own powers to do two bold things—bold, that is, for a youth not yet two-and-twenty—he not only determined to trust to his pen for his livelihood, but he added to his responsibilities by marrying, in August of the same year,—his wife being Mary Ann Swann, daughter of Thomas Swann, of Wetherby, Yorkshire.¹ It was a bold thing—a doubly bold thing—thus to tempt fortune; but

"Luck attends the downright striker,"

and in the following year the youthful dramatist entered into an engagement with Davidge, of the Coburg Theatre, to write "pieces, dramas, farces, and dramatic squibs," whenever they were wanted (and they were wanted somewhat

¹ Douglas Jerrold left five children, of whom but two, his youngest son—Thomas Serle Jerrold—and younger daughter, are now living.

frequently in those days), at a weekly salary. For four years this engagement continued, then author and manager quarrelled, and the former took his new piece to Elliston, of the Surrey Theatre, with whom he entered into an agreement similar to the one with Davidge. The MS. of the new play was handed in to Elliston as an earnest of good faith—that play was *Black-Eyed Susan*, and (produced June 8th, 1829) proved to be one of the most successful dramatic ventures then recorded; it ran for three hundred nights, was performed first at the transpontine house, and then as an after-piece at a West End theatre,—T. P. Cooke (the William of the play) doing the double event every night. Such a success nowadays would mean a very considerable sum for the successful dramatist; the management reaped a golden harvest, and Cooke (as Hepworth Dixon put it) “became quite a personage in society. Testimonials were got up for Elliston and Cooke on the glory of its success, but Jerrold’s share of the gain was slight,—about seventy pounds of the many thousands which it realised for the management.” In the following year Jerrold essayed something of a more ambitious nature, when, at the same theatre, he produced *Thomas à Becket*. This, too, was highly successful, and the author received congratulations, not from friends alone, but from others who were now beginning to hear of “little Shakespeare in a camlet cloak,” as a friend had affectionately named him. A notable letter on this occasion is one from Mary Russell Mitford, who wrote—“I was greatly interested by the account of the enthusiastic reception given by the

audience of *Black-Eyed Susan* to a successor rather above their sphere. It was hearty, genial English—much like the cheering which an election mob might have bestowed on some speech of Pitt, or Burke, or Sheridan, which they were sure was fine, although they hardly understood it." It was after the success of this play that some friend warmly congratulated Jerrold, saying, "You'll be the Surrey Shakespeare." "The sorry Shakespeare, you mean," was his quick reply. I have named these two plays especially from among the many which my grandfather wrote during the first decade of his literary activity, because of the marked popularity of the one, and of the marked literary advance of *Thomas à Becket* over its author's earlier dramatic productions.

In 1829 Douglas Jerrold became sub-editor of *The Ballot*, with the work of dramatic critic and reviewer on the same periodical. After 1830 his contributions found their way into the more important magazines—*Blackwood's*, *The New Monthly*, *The Freemason's Quarterly*, *The Athenæum*, etc. It was about this time, too (early in the thirties),—the time of the great Reform agitation—that Jerrold wrote a somewhat violent political pamphlet, which was suppressed by the authorities, and of which I have been unable to ascertain even the subject. In 1832 *Punch in London* was started on his short career of but a few weeks, bearing on his pages many signs of the sharp, incisive style which ten years later was to characterise the "Q." letters in *Punch*. Sometimes fully signed, sometimes with initials, now with a "J.," and now with the pen-name of Henry

Brownrigg, and often entirely unacknowledged (as, for instance, the *Blackwood* contributions), miscellaneous sketches and papers by Douglas Jerrold are scattered all over the periodical literature of the time.

In 1838 Douglas Jerrold's *Men of Character* was published in three volumes, the work being illustrated by William Makepeace Thackeray, still anxious for an artist's career, and as yet some years removed from his own literary success. The "Men" had been gathered together from the pages of *Blackwood's* and *The New Monthly*. In *Blackwood's Magazine*, too, I have recently lighted upon a somewhat lengthy paper on "The Science of Swindling," a paper which (although unacknowledged) is very evidently from Douglas Jerrold's pen. It is, I think, interesting as being a forerunner of the "Handbook," which is included in this volume, and which (originally published in 1839) has not been before re-issued, though the tiny volume, with its four illustrations by "Phiz," is in much demand among collectors.

The years from 1830 to 1840, which I have just referred to, were no less busy ones to Douglas Jerrold the dramatist, than they were to Douglas Jerrold the journalist and essay-writer. In 1830 *The Devil's Ducat* (Jerrold's only play in blank verse) was produced at the Adelphi; the following year *The Bride of Ludgate* was brought out at Drury Lane; and in 1832, at the same theatre, *The Rent Day*, one of its author's most successful pieces, perhaps, indeed, the most successful example of that domestic drama which he was wont to call—after the manner of Touchstone

—"a poor thing—but, mine own." Each year saw one or two new plays produced; in 1835, indeed, on one day (February 17th), three new plays by Jerrold were brought out, *The Hazard of the Die* at Drury Lane (with *Black-Eyed Susan* as an after-piece), *The Schoolfellows* at the Queen's Theatre, and *The Man's an Ass* at the Olympic, while, towards the close of the same year, *Doves in a Cage* appeared at the Adelphi. In 1836, in conjunction with his brother-in-law—W. J. Hammond—he took the Strand Theatre, and under the *nom de plume* of Henry Brownrigg, during the few months of the unlucky enterprise, brought out four new plays, in one of which, *The Painter of Ghent*, the author himself took the leading character, but after a fortnight wisely gave it up. The speculation was not successful, and Jerrold retired from it, Hammond speaking an address which his brother-in-law had penned for the occasion, and in which he said: "We began with a tragic drama, *The Painter of Ghent*; but, as the aspect of the boxes and pit was much more tragic than we could wish, we, in sailor's phrase, 'let go the painter.' We tried something like a ballet, which, after a few nights (but purely out of mercy to the reputation of Taglioni and Perrot), we withdrew. We found that our legs were not very good, and so we resolved to produce comedy of words and character; in other phrase, mistrusting our legs, we resolved henceforth to stand only upon our head."

In 1840, under the general editorship of Douglas Jerrold, there appeared *Heads of the People*, a well-known series of sketches by Thackeray, R. H. Horne, Laman Blanchard,

the editor,¹ and others, the heads being illustrated by Kenny Meadows.

In 1841 (to be exact, it was July 17th) *Punch* started on his honourable and successful career. At the time that Henry Mayhew and his friends were bringing out the first number Jerrold was in Boulogne, and his earliest contribution only arrived in time for the second number, but from that time up to the time of his death, nearly sixteen years later, hardly a week went by without his contributing. *Punch* was not yet two months old when Douglas Jerrold commenced that series of trenchant, yet fanciful articles on topical, political, and social questions signed "Q.," which gave the paper much of the political weight which it long carried.² In *Punch* Douglas Jerrold undoubtedly found a literary vehicle admirably suited to his genius. In its pages he could be fanciful or severe, playful or satiric, as occasion demanded. Through this medium some of his best work was first placed before the public, *The Story of a Feather*, *Punch's Complete Letter-Writer*, *Punch's Letters to his Son*, and *Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures*, from among his collected

¹ Douglas Jerrold's contributions to the series are included in his collected works under the title of "Sketches of the English."

² In the very first of these "Q." papers (on "Peel Regularly Called In") there occurs an instance of that happy method of seizing upon unusual illustrations to which I have before made reference, an illustration, too, gleaned by Jerrold from his readings in natural history. "The naturalist," says "Q.," "speaks of a turtle that continued to live after its brain was taken from its skull, and the cavity stuffed with cotton. Is not England, with spinning-jenny Peel at the head of its affairs, in this precise predicament?"

works ; an unrepublished series on *Our Honeymoon*, the powerful "Q." papers, and shorter pieces innumerable.

In 1843 *The Illuminated Magazine* was commenced under Jerrold's editorship, and in its pages appeared those "Chronicles of Cloverwork," which the author always looked upon as of the very best of his work, while of short essays and sketches ("The Folly of the Sword," herein, is one of them) "by the editor" there are many examples. *The Illuminated Magazine*, however, was not long-lived ; still, undeterred by a past failure, Jerrold commenced in January 1845 *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*, which achieved an instant success ; its object was set forth in a prospectus from which I will quote one or two sentences, as they are, I think, indicative not only of his work on this magazine, but because they are applicable to everything which he wrote :—

"It is intended that this work shall be mainly devoted to a consideration of the social wants and rightful claims of the PEOPLE—that it shall appeal to the hearts of the masses of England. . . .

"It is our belief that the present epoch is pregnant with more human interest than any previous era ; as it is also our faith that the present social contest, if carried out on all sides with 'conscience and tender heart,' must end in a more equitable allotment of the good provided for all men. To aid, however humbly, in the righteous and bloodless struggle, is a truer, more grateful glory, than any glory blatant in gazettes. And an aroused spirit begins to feel this. Awaking from a long, vain dream, that showed the many created only to minister to the few, the said spirit

believes—or says it believes—in the universality of the human heart. Hence it vindicates a common right to happiness: hence, in its new tenderness, it even ‘babbles o’ green fields’ for the health and healthful thoughts of the people. So much the better. . . .

“It will be our chief object to make every essay—however brief, and however light and familiar its treatment—breathe *with a purpose*. Experience assures us that, especially at the present day, it is *by a defined purpose alone*, whether significant in twenty pages or in twenty lines, that the sympathies of the world are to be engaged, and its support insured.”

In the pages of the *Shilling Magazine* appeared, month by month, instalments of one of Jerrold’s chief works, the story, that is, of *St. Giles and St. James*, an endeavour “to show, in the person of St. Giles, the victim of an ignorant disregard of the social claims of the poor upon the rich; of the governed million upon the governing few.” The author was charged with trying to set class against class, with writing “bitterly,” and in issuing the completed work in volume form he wrote an introductory note, in which he said, “I submit this book to the generous interpretation of the reader. Some of it has been called ‘bitter’; indeed, ‘bitter’ has, I think, a little too often been the ready word when certain critics have condescended to bend their eyes upon my page; so ready that, were my ink redolent of myrrh and frankincense, I well know the sort of ready-made criticism that would cry, with a denouncing shiver, ‘Aloes, aloes!’”

Shortly after the *Magazine* had started, one of the most brilliant of Jerrold's comedies—*Time Works Wonders*—was produced at the Haymarket, and, favoured with a most exceptional cast,—including Madame Vestris, Mrs. Glover, Mrs. Humby, Messrs. Farren, Charles Mathews, Buckstone, and Tilbury, all leading actors,—had a most successful run. In the summer of 1846 *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper* was commenced. In its columns appeared "The Barber's Chair," a weekly gossip on topical events by the editor. The paper proved a great success, and promised to become a valuable property, as it was undoubtedly a valuable accession to the Radical literature of the time, for "Douglas Jerrold was enthusiastic on the popular side as Shelley was." Successful though it was, the newspaper after awhile began to flag, and Jerrold (impulsive ever) wearied of it, and after rather more than two years gave it up. The *Magazine* did not last much longer, though a kind of galvanic life was imparted to its last few numbers by the editor's remarkable papers on "Twiddle-thumb Town." ¹

1851 saw the publication in numbers (the way in which many of Dickens's stories were issued) of *The Man made of Money*, which was the only story Jerrold ever published originally in separate form. This was the third and last, and by some critics thought to be the best, of Jerrold's long writings. In it occurs the oft-quoted remark regarding

¹ Recently reprinted in the Jerrold volume of Paterson's "Treasure-House of Tales."

Australia—"A country so fertile that if you but tickle her with a hoe she laughs with a harvest."

In 1852 Douglas Jerrold was offered and accepted the editorship of *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, at a salary of one thousand pounds a year. This work, along with his *Punch* writings, mainly occupied him for the last few years of his life. In *Lloyd's*—which, as one critic has put it, "he found in the street and annexed to literature"—he had a platform whence he could every week address many thousands of readers, and infuse into them some of the passionate feeling which moved him when oppression was to be combatted or shams to be laid bare. Under his editorship the circulation of the paper rose by thousands weekly, and proud as he was of its rise, he felt keenly the grave responsibility of his charge. Much of the best of his writing on social and political questions appeared in his *Lloyd's* leaders, a small volume of which was issued in 1868, but which is now not easily obtainable.

In 1853 the comedy of *St. Cupid* was produced, and in the year following, *The Heart of Gold*, which was the last of Jerrold's many dramatic productions, nearly fifty of which are scattered over the years between 1821 and 1854, and scarce a third of which are included in his collected works.

In 1853 Douglas Jerrold started a penny subscription, with the aggregate of which (9,215 pence were subscribed) to present Kossuth¹ with a copy of Shakespeare, the

¹ Louis Kossuth is still living (he is nearly ninety) in retirement at Turin.

Hungarian patriot having (while in Austrian prisons) learned English by means of the works of the great dramatist. The matter was carried to a successful issue, and on the 8th May 1853 Jerrold had the gratification of publicly presenting Kossuth with a casket model of Shakespeare's house, containing the complete works of the poet. This occasion was one of the very few in which Douglas Jerrold spoke in public. He was asked, in the same year, to stand for Finsbury, but he declined, the activity of a member's duties being, he said, incompatible with his own.

Douglas Jerrold died on the 8th of June 1857.

WALTER JERROLD.

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THE HANDBOOK OF
SWINDLING.

The
Handbook of Swindling,
By the late
Captain Barabbas Whitefeather.
Late of the body-guard of his Majesty,
King Carlos; Treasurer of the British
Wine and Vinegar Company;
Trustee for the protection of the
River Thames from incendiaries;
principal inventor of Poyais
stock; Ranger of St. George's
Fields; original Patentee
of the Parachute Con-
veyance Associa-
tion; Knight of
every order of
the fleece;
Scamp
and
Cu
r.

“A man he was to all the country *dear*.”—GOLDSMITH.

Edited by John Jackdaw.

PREFACE OF THE EDITOR.

THE editor has disciplined himself to receive with becoming moderation the tremendous expression of national gratitude consequent on the publication of this valuable work—the production of the late estimable Captain Barabbas Whitefeather. It was discovered among many other papers accidentally left at the lodgings of the deceased, and placed in the hands of the editor by the executors of the lamented and—if a novel epithet may be applied to him—talented author.

When “handbooks” devoted to the lighter elegancies, nay, to the frivolities, of life are every day poured down upon a thankful generation, it would indeed be to incur the charge of poltroonery to doubt the brilliant success of the present essay.

The philosophical observer who has witnessed the fervent welcome accorded by a British public to “The Handbook of Skittles,” “The Handbook of Cheese-Toasting,” “The Handbook of Eel-Skinning,” “The Handbook of Nutmeg-Grating,” “The Handbook of Corn-Cutting,” “The Handbook of Kitten-Drowning,” and other productions of lesser pith and purpose,—the philosophic observer cannot but glow with the sweetest and liveliest feelings of anticipated

pleasure at the outburst of national gratitude acknowledging and rejoicing in the publication of

“THE HANDBOOK OF SWINDLING.”

Let us for a moment consider the comprehensiveness of the subject. Other handbooks have their merits and their uses : far be it from the editor to detract one iota from their claims upon a thoughtful people ; yet it must be conceded that their different subjects apply rather to the wants of sections of the public than to the public in its integrity. For instance, how few rejoice in the masculine exercise of skittles ! Toasted cheese, albeit the favourite diet of many of Cyclopean digestion, is sedulously shunned by dyspeptic hundreds of thousands. The class of the eel-skinning public is indeed most limited ; nutmeg is never dreamt of by at least a million of our fellow-subjects ; a million more, it is our cheerful hope, know not the visitation of corns ; whilst, could a census be taken of the number of kittens annually sacrificed by drowning, it would possibly be discovered that not one British subject out of five hundred is ever called upon to perform that painful, yet necessary and most domestic operation. It must then be acknowledged that all handbooks hitherto published are more or less limited in their application ; but for “The Handbook of Swindling,”—why, it is a national work ; a *vade mecum* for a whole people !

It was the intention of the editor to dedicate this work to some illustrious individual worthy of the distinction. But so many candidates—all equally deserving of the honour—

with claims so nicely balanced, rose before him, that the editor, considering it would be invidious to many to select one alone, dedicates the book to the nation at large. Yes, he gives it to his country ; but too well repaid if he shall be the means of calling from the working day road of life one simple traveller to the pleasant “primrose path ” made easier and laid more open to him by this golden volume.

BREAKNECK STEPS,
OLD BAILEY.

THE HANDBOOK OF SWINDLING.

CHAPTER I.

The reader is introduced to Captain Whitefeather's relations.

IT was a favourite conviction of my late respected uncle and godfather, Barabbas Whitefeather,—he fell in the very flower of his age, at only forty-five, a premature victim to the insalubrity of Bermuda, where he was stationed in a very public capacity by the British Government,—it was, I say, a pet belief of the sagacious Barabbas that every man had within him what I think heathen philosophers have called a particle of divine gold ; but which my uncle, in the fine simplicity of his nature, and at the same time humanely accommodating his language to the lowest understanding of his species, denominated “a bit of the swindler.”

Discriminating reader, Barabbas Whitefeather was a man of homespun wit, who chewed not his words until they had lost all their original form and vigour ; no, he flung them from him with the air of a man who knows he is laying down a guinea of the best mint gold, and not timidly and sneakingly, like a passer of gilt copper.

“Every man has within him a bit of the swindler !”

The sentence fell upon me in the days of my earliest

childhood ; yes, it was in that ductile, happy, and susceptible season of life that the words of my uncle Barabbas—precious seed!—dropped into my infant heart, where—but let me not boast, let me rather indulge in the luxury of memory—yes, suffer me, complying reader, to carry you into the presence of my sainted uncle : bear with me whilst with affectionate reverence I call up from the abyss of time the interesting shadow of Barabbas Whitefeather.

It was my birthday—I was six years old. I had been promised that that day should be distinguished by a circumstance which, as we advance in life and become involved in the meshes of the world, is apt to be forgotten, albeit of the first importance at the time—I was to be breeched. *I was not.* I can only remember that a cloud seemed suddenly to have fallen upon our house—that my father would come home long after the lamb had lain down to rest, and would still leave the domestic roof before the rising of the lark, that his temper, generally rough, became much rougher ; and that, only a few days before my birthday, on expressing my infantine delights at the trumpets blown before the newly-arrived judges, he rebuked me with unwonted emphasis, at the same time wishing the trumpets and the judges, as I then conceived, very oddly incorporated with one another. I was then within a few days of six years old—I was a fine, tall, plump child, and on my birthday was to have been breeched. The neighbourhood called for it. I repeat it, my birthday came and passed, and found and left me still in coats.

That day, however, was ordained to be the most eventful of my life. It is that day which, if the world shall continue to remember the deeds of Captain Barabbas Whitefeather, must be held by posterity in especial respect. It is to that day that I owe everything ; and what I owe, it

would be the worst of affectation in the world to deny or to forget. To proceed with my history.

“Brab,”—it was thus my father was wont to tamper with the euphony of Barabbas,—“Brab, nunkey wants to see you; so you must toddle with me.”

Some weeks had elapsed since I had seen uncle Barabbas; and at his name visions of cakes and apples, peg-tops and whipping-tops, rose before me. Like Agesilaus, Socrates, Yorick, and other men whom I do not hesitate to call of his kidney, my uncle would chequer and ameliorate the labour of public life by sporting with little children. “He hath borne me on his back a thousand times.” I was of course delighted at the prospect of visiting my uncle; but was at the same time made to wonder at the preparation of my father, who carefully bound up one of his eyes, glued large whiskers on his cheeks, and otherwise so disguised himself that, although I saw him do it, I could scarcely believe it was he. However, I thought it was all to have some game with uncle Barabbas—and in my childishness crowed with laughter at anticipation of the sport.

I walked with my father, and in about half-an-hour came to a very large house, a place I had never seen before: for my dear mother, always fuming about fevers and measles, kept me close at home. My father, suddenly walking very lame, knocked at the door, and through a cold that had come on him all in a minute, asked hoarsely enough for my uncle. The man let us in, and then another man went before us; and then I knew I was in a place where there were heaps of gold and diamonds, for the man unlocked and locked again at least a dozen doors. I give my childish impressions, which I entreat the reader not to smile at, but to remember the simplicity and ingenuousness of my age.

Well, after a time, we were led into an open court, where some gentlemen were throwing up halfpence, and two on a bench were pushing straws; and there was one dancing, and one or two singing, and all as happy as birds.

I looked round the place and saw uncle Barabbas smoking in a corner. I was about to call him when my father gave my arm such a pull I thought it was broken; and so I resolved to say nothing, but to wait and see the fun that father would play off upon uncle. Sure enough Barabbas never knew him; and though my uncle patted me upon the head, he had, I thought, forgotten me, for he gave me nothing. My father and my uncle talked together for a long time; when—I see my uncle now—Barabbas suddenly brought himself up, and raising his head, and extending his right arm, the palm open, he said in a solemn voice—

“Depend upon it, every man has within him a bit of the swindler.”

My father shook his head; whereupon my uncle, for he was very scholarly, and could talk for an hour without stopping, proceeded as follows:—I am perfectly certain as to the words, having subsequently found the whole written speech among other of my uncle’s papers; Barabbas, like some other wits and orators, carefully putting in pen and ink any brilliant thought that struck him—any argument that was a hobby with him, that he might at proper season extemporaneously bring it forth to the delight and astonishment of his hearers. My father shook his head at the dogma of my uncle, who, without stop, continued:—

“Are you so ignorant as to believe in the deficiency of mankind in general—to imagine that nature is so partial a mother as to dower with her best gifts only a few of her children, leaving the multitude defenceless, unarmed? My dear sir,”—here my uncle lowered his voice,—“amend your

ignorance—be just to nature. Do you see tigers whelped without claws—elephants calved that never have tusks—rattlesnakes hatched with no stings? Is nature so niggard—so partial—so unjust? No—philosophers and conquerors have made their marks, and signed their names to the fact—to swindle is to exhibit the peculiar attribute of the human animal; it is at once the triumph and distinguishing faculty of the race. But you will say, do all men swindle? and I ask, do all snakes sting—all elephants gore? There is, however, an unanswerable argument which proves that men, when gregarious, are inevitably swindlers; at least if they are not, let not the failing be placed to their account; they would be, if they might. Let me put a case. You recollect Gloss, the retired merchant? What an excellent man was Gloss! A pattern man to make a whole generation by! Nobody could surpass him in what is called honesty, rectitude, moral propriety, and other gibberish. Well, Gloss joins a ‘Board’; he becomes one of a community; and, immediately, the latent feeling asserts itself: he is a backbone man with the rest of his brotherhood; and though as simple Gloss, and not a member of the ‘board,’ he is the same as ever, yet when acting with his fellows, when one of the body corporate, when he merges the man Gloss in the board member, the inherent faculty becomes active, and he gratifies the instinct, or the refined reason, or whatever men agree to call it—and complacently swindles with the rest. He cannot do otherwise: human nature is tested by the occasion; and if, under the circumstances, he refuse to swindle, he ceases to be a man. Swindling, my dear sir”—and here my uncle spoke in a tremulous voice, and my father seemed touched by the emotion—“Swindling, my dear sir, has indeed a far more comprehensive meaning than that superficially awarded to it by, possibly,

very respectable people. Good soldiers may fight, pillage, and violate under a banner, and yet, in truth, shall not be able to read and interpret the legend emblazoned on it."

I could perceive that my father did not perfectly understand this. He, therefore, nodded assentingly, and my uncle, with new animation, proceeded:—

"When I reflect on the extensive and subtle operation of the faculty—when I perceive that, in this our best possible social state, it is, so to speak, the cement that keeps society together; the bond of union; the very salt of human government—it does, I confess it, irk me to find men ungraciously deny its existence, putting off its triumphs upon other motives, and depriving swindling of the glory of its deeds. Strange perversion of human intellect—laughable contradiction of moral purposes! Thus, the politician flutters at the very breath of swindler; thus, the stockbroker struts and swells, and lays his hand upon his waistcoat with a blank look of wondering innocence at the slightest allusion to the faculty that makes a man of him—to which he owes his carriage and country house, his conservatories and his pineries; and above all, the flattering hope of calling Lord Giggleton son-in-law; his lordship being over head, and, what is more, over ears in love with Arabella's guineas. And yet, such is the base, the black ingratitude of human nature, that this man, this most adroit and lucky stockbroker, starts even at the name of swindler! He indignantly denies the slightest obligation to the higher faculty—the *mens divinior* of the cabinet, the mart, and the counting-house. Look at Sir Godfrey Measles, the illustrious pork contractor, in whom our brave and magnanimous sailors confide for dinners. Did he not in the most handsome way forfeit a fine to his king and country for having failed to supply swine's flesh at so

much per stone? And then, having paid his fine like a patriot and a man,—did he not, having before bought up all the pork to be had—did he not, with the gushing feelings of a philanthropist, offer it at three times the contract price? Now what was this? Men who veil their meaning in allegory may say that Sir Godfrey Measles ‘drove his pigs to a fine market.’ For myself, I elevate the homely phrase of pig-driver into the more ennobling name of swindler. Others may say that Sir Godfrey only traded—I stick to my belief; I say he swindled. More: I reverence him for the act; my only deep regret is, that he should have failed in an ingenuous gratitude, and denied the action of the higher principle. I have long looked upon the world, and, with sorrow I say it, in nothing do the generations of successful men show so much cold and callous ingratitude as in their treatment of their guardian genius, that prettiest of Pucks, that best of Robin Goodfellows, that deftest of household fairies, hight Swindling!”

My father cast his one eye towards his eloquent brother with a look of speaking admiration; and, although there was a pause, did not presume to make any rejoinder. My uncle proceeded:—

“But why number examples? Why attempt to prove that which every man, if he would but consult the recesses of his own bosom, must truly know? Ask all the professions; demand of the lawyer, with yellow, studious check, wherefore he should coin gold out of little strips of paper, written over by youthful scribes at two or three shillings per diem. Request him to give you the philosophy of costs—the exquisite meaning of appearance and declaration, and reply and rejoinder, and all the thousand terms invented by the most cunning class of labourers, the overlookers at the building of Babel. Ask the sleek practitioner

to what he owes his fortune. To common-sense—to justice—to the fair and rational barter of labour for shillings? If he be a hypocrite—if he be resolved to clap in with the world, and carry on a profitable duplicity, he will swell like a bull-frog at the query, and, forgetful of his knuckles, will strike his heart, answering with the big-mouthed ‘Yes!’ But if at the end of a long practice there should by miracle remain in that attorney’s bosom a throb of truth, he will blandly, yet significantly smile at the words—the counters men play with—common-sense and justice, and magnanimously and unblushingly declare his debt to—swindling!

“Is it otherwise with the physician, who sells his guesses for truth, and doubts and doubts a patient into the grave, whilst his medicinal palm is open for the guinea? When the apothecary vends cinnamon and peppermint water for *elixir vitæ*, doth he practise a noble art? Yea; for, safely and successfully, he—swindles.

“When the tradesman—his housemaid at the time perhaps in Bridewell for petty larceny committed on the grease-pot—when he, smiling across the counter at his victim, puts off knowingly the poorest commodity at the highest price, how stands he in relation to his captive handmaid? Why, Rebecca has robbed, but the tradesman has only driven his trade: the slut has for ever and for ever lost her character, with it seven pounds *per annum*, and, it may be, tea and sugar included—but for Mr. Jackson, her master, he has turned the profit penny; he has—but all in the way of business—swindled.”

“It is very true,” exclaimed my father with an oath, “it is very true. When what is swindling isn’t swindling according to law, it’s a fortune to a man; but when it’s agin law, and found out——”

"The result I know," cried my uncle, a slight tint of red suffusing his manly cheek. "All mankind may be divided into two classes: the swindlers according to custom and to law, and the swindlers according to the bent of their natural genius."

"True agin," cried my father, slapping his thigh.

"Still, the propensity," said my uncle, "is universal: men only want temptation. It is extraordinary how, like a chain, the feeling runs from breast to breast. Jack Smasher was one of the prettiest hands at coining; and more, he was blessed with a wife born, I should say, with a genius for passing bad money. She took a crown—one of her husband's base-begotten offspring—purchased with it three pennyworth of rhubarb from a Quaker chemist, who—undone man!—handed over four-and-ninepence change. Aminadab Straightback was, even among his brethren, the brightest child of truth. In due season Aminadab detected the guileful crown, and in his own clear breast resolved to destroy it. However, it remained by the strangest accident in his till, and by an accident still more extraordinary, was given in part of change for a guinea to a gentleman a little the worse for liquor, who on his way home to bed took the precaution of dropping into Straightback's for a box of—his own patent—anti-bacchic pills. In the morning the vinous gentleman discovered the pocket-piece, but as he had changed more than one guinea, could not with certainty detect the giver of the counterfeit. No matter. It remained loose with other money in his pocket, and one day, to his own surprise, he found he had passed it. He had taken a journey, and it was very dark when, in the handsomest manner, he fee'd the coachman. The poor man who drove the Tally-ho did not realise more than £400 per

annum, and could not afford to lose five shillings; hence Smasher's crown became at a fitting opportunity the property of a sand-blind old gentlewoman, who, her loss discovered, lifted up her hands at the iniquity of the world, and put aside the brassy wickedness. The good old soul never missed a charity sermon. The Reverend Mr. Sulphur-tongue made a sweet discourse in favour of the conversion of the Jews, and the churchwardens condescended to hold each a plate. To the great disgust of the discoverers, a bad crown was detected amongst the subscribed half-crowns and shillings. The beadle was directed to destroy it. He intended to do so, but, in pure forgetfulness, passed it one day for purl; the landlady of the 'George' having, as she said, 'taken it, was resolved not to lose it,' and by some accident it was given to a pedlar, who, after a walk of twenty miles, entered an ale-house, took his supper of bread and cheese, went to bed, rose, and proffered for his account Jack Smasher's pocket-piece. The pedlar was immediately given into the hands of a constable, taken before a magistrate, and ordered to be imprisoned and whipped as a passer of counterfeit coin."

"See what luck is!" cried my father; "it's the Quaker *what* should have lost the dollar."

"He couldn't do it; for though he was a most respectable person, and lived and died with that character, he was but a man. He had been swindled—the link of the chain was touched, and it vibrated—you perceive, it vibrated?"

Again my father nodded.

"Yes," exclaimed Barabbas Whitefeather, "I repeat it—the sympathy is universal. All men can, do, or might, swindle. Though with many the propensity be latent, it surely exists, and needs but the happy moment to be awakened into life.

The proof is easy: take ten, twenty, thirty men—creatures of light; admirable, estimable, conscientious persons; by-words of excellence, proverbs of truth in their individual dealings; and yet, make of them a ‘board’—a ‘committee’—a ‘council’—a ‘company’—no matter what may be the collective name by which they may be known—and immediately every member will acknowledge the quickening of a feeling—a sudden growth of an indomitable lust to—swindle. What is this but a proof of the faculty—as I have said—dormant, but requiring only the necessary agent to awaken it? Oh! let no man perk himself up in the pride of his innocence—strut and pout, big with the prejudice of respectability! He knows not the mystery of his own nature; for though to his own eyes he shall be a saint, he will, when time and purpose shall see fit to call his better feelings into life, he will, he must, he cannot do otherwise than—swindle.”

My father, though a strong man, was much affected.

“As for you, my dear child,” said my uncle, taking me by the hand, kissing me, and looking benevolently upon me, “as for you, remember the words of Barabbas White-feather. At present you know not their worth, but a time will come when better than pearls or gold will be this my parting counsel to you. Throughout your life do nought but swindle. If you can, swindle on the right side of the statute, but at all events, my dear child,”—even now I feel the pressure of that wise man’s lip, the warm tear trickling down my cheeks,—“at all events, Barabbas, swindle!”

I am now in my nine-and-thirtieth year; and from my first day of discretion until this, the season of ripest manhood, I can, laying my hand upon my heart, most conscientiously declare that never for a moment have I forgotten the last injunction of the best of uncles. But

why should I speak on this head? The world will do me justice.

My uncle shook my parent by the hand. "Good-bye," he said; "we may never meet again, for I am now two-and-forty, and you know"—this I could *not* understand—"you know *it's fourteen penn'orth*."

My father, choking with emotion, cried, "D—n 'em!" We quitted my uncle; and I trust I shall not be accused of adopting the language of hyperbole, when I state that we quitted him with feelings far more easy of conception than description.

Only a twelvemonth after this, I lost my excellent father. It may prove to the giddy and the vain the uncertainty of life, when I state that my worthy parent was in robust health one minute and dead the next. It may also prove that he had held some place in the world, when I assure the reader that crowds of people flocked to our house to pay honour to his cold remains; which, for the benefit of his widow and son, were exhibited at sixpence a head to grown persons, and half-price for children. I should be unjust to my parent's memory were I to withhold another circumstance illustrative of the consequence of my father to the world at large: the night-cap in which he died was purchased by a gentleman, a lover of the fine arts, after a severe contest with other bidders, for two guineas.

And so much for my uncle and my father, both worthy of the name of Whitefeather.

CHAPTER II.

*Captain Whitefeather takes an enlarged view of Swindling.
Social evils and their remedy.*

No—the theme is too pregnant with circumstance; too vast—too voluminous. Let me then subdue the vain, though laudable, ambition—let me repress the fond, the wild desire of such distinction. Is it for a single pen to write the History of Swindling? Is it for one man to chronicle, with scrupulous fidelity, the rise and progress of the exquisite art (for I must call it so)? Is it for one curious pair of eyes—one toilsome hand—to pore over and put down the many million facts to be registered in a complete body of the Science? Could the life of a patriarch, even though he worked the hours of a cotton-spinner, suffice for the labour? Consider, Barabbas, what running to and fro—what fetching and carrying of truths—what sifting and winnowing of chaff and husk—what gold-washing—what pearl-diving! Now picking up stray matter for your work in Egypt—now, with a thought, among the sages in India—now off, it may be, upon a wild-goose chase to Arabia Petræa—now among the Scandinavians—and now, cold as a snowball, to be called away to the opium-sellers at the walls of the Tartars! Is it possible for one man, though with ribs of brass and soles of adamant, to go through the toil and travel? And this, be it remarked, will only take in the first thousand years or so of the age of our dear, ill-used mother earth. How much remains to be done—what crooked ways to thread—what dirt and rust to scratch away—what inscriptions to guess at—what monuments to measure—even before you come to Semiramis!

And when, reeling like a porter under a thousand-weight of facts—for a very few facts make a pound—you arrive at Semiramis, have you disciplined yourself to bear the indifference of a superficial generation—to be asked by listless ignorance, “Who the devil is Semiramis?” Dear Barabbas, your yearnings are indeed most noble; but there is a limit to human action—there is a point where man must stop. The task is not earthly; or, if indeed it be a mortal labour, it is only to be achieved by the united heads and hands of many. A band of hard-working encyclopædists—temperate labourers living upon bread and water and figs—might possibly, in the course of a few lustres, produce some hundred volumes of the work; but a complete body of swindling from the birth of time to its present lustihood, it is a thing only to be dreamed of—a glorious phantasm—a magnificent but most deceitful vision!

But grant it done. Say that the last proof—the ten millionth sheet—lies before you, the smooth-faced devil waiting at your garret door to carry off the corrected matter for the press. Say that it is printed, published, and the whole five hundred volumes folio scrupulously conneed, as they doubtless would be, by the critics—alack! alack!—what a melancholy book bath the press groaned with—what a ghastly chronicle, what a blood-dyed, tear-stained record!

“A complete body of swindling!” Let us turn a few of the leaves. They creak like dungeon hinges! Are not the pictures terrible? Whole generations of men, thin-chapped, hollow-eyed, scourged and in bonds; fainting in midday; stark with the dews of night. Tens of thousands, living carcasses, in mines—thousands and thousands writhing in blood and agony upon the field—with the vassals of

glory, a cloud of vultures, hovering to pick their bones. Next let us peep through prison bars, and—no; close the book—it is too shocking—one's marrow freezes, and the brain reels at it.

"Methinks," says the reader, "the Captain takes a too comprehensive view of his subject."

Right, sagacious reader; and yet, were the history of swindling in all its ramifications to be duly chronicled, the work would be no less voluminous, no jot less tragical. The present is, after all, not an auspicious age for folios; neither is it the best of all possible eras for the publication of disagreeable truths. Lazarus himself, to touch worldly sympathy, should in these days be a Lazarus in superfine cloth—the best cambric and the glossiest beaver; nay, he would be something the gainer by a waistcoat of gold-smear'd velvet, and, at least, a chain of silver. To make iniquity or sorrow bearable, it is highly necessary that it should be properly dressed. Hence, reader, I, Barabbas Whitefeather, instructed by the better spirit of the age, forego my first Utopian purpose, and leaving the full history of swindling to be written by a future college of sages, shall confine myself more immediately to the existing wants of the world—shall attend to the crying necessities of the present generation. Controlled by my better genius, I renounce folios.

After all, the world has not, as I at first superficially believed, so keen a want of a complete history of swindling: for how many books have been written which, although not professedly treating of the theme, are, by their very subject, works of reference and authority in the matter! What, for instance, is much of *Ancient History*? What *The Lives of the Roman Emperors*? What *The History of Conquests*? What *The History of Discovery*—from the

first finding of Mesopotamia to the last providential flight upon New Zealand? If men will read not with their eyes alone, but with understanding hearts, how much is there in all these works, in all these narratives, that is indeed no other than materials for a complete body of swindling? Loose pearls that need stringing—scattered lights to be brought to one point? Indeed, to a contemplative mind, to a reader properly prepared for the perusal of history and biography, it is almost impossible for him to open a volume from which he should not gather knowledge of a swindling kind. It is often the very staple of a book, though to the shame of many writers, I grieve to say it, the subject is most ungenerously disguised under foreign trappings—passed off under a false name. Hence, reflecting that if men will look round them, they are not wholly destitute of works containing the philosophy of swindling on a grand historical scale—on an enlarged and transcendental plan—I shall endeavour to prevail upon myself to become merely useful, leaving it to the poorly ambitious to glitter and to soar. Let other men make pedestals to themselves of unopened folios; they have their veneration—they are talked of, never read. I—I will descend among the crowd—will mix with my fellow-creatures—will right and left scatter among the children of innocence a “Handbook”—a veritable tome to be carried between the thumbs and fingers of men in their paths by day, and like a guardian and protecting genius to nestle in their bosoms at night. Yes, it shall be no large carcass of a book; no literary mammoth of a bygone time; a load for a shelf; but a light and dainty fairy for the palm. A “Handbook!”—Yes, there is a freshness, a beauty, a truthfulness in the name; it shall be “THE HANDBOOK OF SWINDLING!” Uncut folios, avaunt! and, thick as humming-birds in tropic

groves, "Handbooks," in green and gold, trim your glowing winglets and flutter among men.¹

Having resolved upon the mode in which I shall benefit humanity, having come to the determination to contract myself into the smallest possible size, that I may the more deftly make my way among the crowd, it is but due to myself—it is but just to my readers—to make known in a few words the extent and range of my purpose. That purpose is, I am proud to feel it, of the best wisdom, of the noblest benevolence; it is to make every man—at least every thinking, reasonable man, for I write not to blockheads—a SWINDLER. Yes; it is my aim to render him, at all points, armed for the contest of life—to prepare him for the cutting and thrusting and picking and stealing of this eventful passage. It is my purpose to make known a few golden rules—the result of a long and various experience—by which the attentive and quick-witted student may learn to play with men as he would play with pieces of chess, by which every move on the board of life may be his own, to the utter discomfiture of a plodding and merely painstaking opponent. And in all this there shall be nothing legally forbidden; nothing that shall suddenly shock your delicate nostrils, reader, with the smell of hemp: no, no; though turnkeys and the hangman walk about you, if you are an

¹ The reader will perceive from the self-complacency with which the author talks of "Handbook," that he would pass the compound as purely one of his own invention. The editor, however, conceives it to be a part of his stern duty to state that a book printed at Baden-Baden, where the Captain was wont to retire in autumn for the benefit of the waters, and other benefits—a book entitled (we give the English) "The Handbook of Cogging," was found among the Captain's other literary effects. He had, doubtless, forgotten that Handbook was from *Handbuch*.—[JOHN JACKDAW, Ed.]

apt scholar, you shall snap your fingers at them, and swindle securely.

“And now,” thinks the reader,—for I know his thoughts as well as I know my own whiskers,—“now the book begins to open ; now the work warms up.” Be not impatient.

Impressed as I am with the purpose of this inestimable little work, it befits the dignity of that purpose that there should be no unseemly haste, no helter-skelter in the communication of ideas. Were I writing the “HANDBOOK OF EGG-SUCKING,” or any such domestic treatise, I might jump into my subject ; but “SWINDLING” is not to be approached irreverently.

Its influence on the happiness of society is to be duly considered, that the maxims by which it is the hope of the author to recommend it may have their due weight upon the disciple ; who, when he shall learn that swindling is, indeed, synonymous with self-preservation, will brush up his hair, take breath, and then, unless he have no more sensibility than a stock or stone, lapse into a state of the profoundest and most admiring attention. Yes ; I was right—the pupil is now all ears.

Philanthropists and philosophers have come to the comfortable conclusion that there are in England too many Englishmen. John Bull has played the Sultan, and has an alarmingly numerous family. Unhappily, however, he has not the Sultan’s wealth—neither has he the Sultan’s prerogative : he cannot feed all his sons and daughters ; he must not choke or drown them. The bowstring and the Bosphorus are not for John. What then is to become of the family of Bull ? Shall they tear each other piecemeal ? Forgetful of their origin, shall they destroy one another in civil fight ? *Amor patriæ*—humanity—all the finer and nobler feelings of the human heart, revolt at the very

thought. "What," the philanthropist will inquire with tears in his eyes—"what, then, is to be done with a super-abundant population?" My reply is as brief as, I flatter myself, it is conclusive—they must swindle. We have been gradually adopting what I believe to be the only remedy for the national disease; we have for some years in many instances applied what I conceive to be the only cure for the social malady; but it is only when it shall be applied upon a grand scale, when, in fact, a curative science shall be professed and practised by men cognisant of all its subtle and most bountiful capabilities—for it is yet in its infancy—that the greatness of its social value will be thoroughly manifested and acknowledged.

It is allowed that all the professions are full to running over. The Church is crammed to suffocation with applicants for deaneries, prebends, vicarages; to say nothing of the thousands with their hearts fixed upon mitres. There is hardly standing room among the candidates for lawn and silk aprons.

In the Courts of Law there are wigs as thick as cauliflowers in Battersea Gardens. Besides, the sneaking spirit of the times has so enervated the British character, that Englishmen lack somewhat of that generous pugnacity which, in the days of our fathers, would precipitate them into the arena of the law to feed with their own flesh the lions therein prowling. And when it happens that a gentleman with the true English blood in him shall resolve upon such noble sacrifice, why, so numerous are the animals awaiting him, that many a term shall pass, and not one of the *carnivora* shall have so much as a mouthful of the honest gentleman's flesh—shall not even make their mark in him. Consider it well, reader; count, if you can, the hundreds of excellent, watchful, well-disposed persons

who, every morning during term, come down to the Courts to prey ; and who, nevertheless, return to their homes all innocent of strife. Is not this a discouraging prospect for thousands of young men, most of them very willing to become Chancellor? But so it is ; the profession has a greater supply than demand. In fifty years it will be thought great luck in a man to die Lord Chief Justice or Attorney-General.

In the Army, a profession that I have followed with an ardour peculiarly my own, can anything be more barren? Here am I, at the age of nine-and-thirty—I, who have—but no, the dignity of my subject, the national importance of this treatise, shall not be lessened or neglected by aught personal. Hence, I disdain to speak of a deep bayonet wound inflicted in the most dastardly manner in the small of my back, during my first campaign in Biscay—of a gash across my nose, from an enemy's sickle, when bivouacking in a hen-roost—of an imaginary fracture of the *os*—but no ; I have said it, I will not mingle my private griefs, were I chicken-hearted enough to think them so, with matters of national interest. Besides, every man's country is proverbially ungrateful to him. Hence, I should despise myself did I more than allude, in the most evanescent way, to my heavy pecuniary losses in the service of Mexico, Chili, Peru, and other places too numerous to mention. But so it is ; and what, I ask—what cares the commander-in-chief, sitting in his pride of place at the Horse Guards—what cares he for my superb plum-pudding spotted charger, shot whilst grazing—it was only the day before I had been on him—by an enemy's vidette? What cares he for the loss of my three saddles, generously given up to be converted into highlows for my barefooted comrades? Yes, what—I must, I will

ask it—cares the said commander-in-chief for the subsequent ignominy endured in consequence of that gallant steed—that by me devoted leather? Would it affect him, even for half-an-hour, to know that on my return to England—my beloved land!—after three years' absence, I was, at half-past six on a December morning, summoned by my landlady to see a Mr. Jones, the said Mr. Jones and a friend at the same time entering my apartment to remind me of my lost barb, my long-forgotten saddles? On that morning the commander-in-chief was, I doubt it not, snoring ingloriously in bed; little dreaming—it may be, little caring—that at that hour a brother soldier, placed between two big men in a small gig, was being conveyed at the rate of three miles an hour through fog and frost to Chancery Lane. I remember the Tyburn-like pace; for, let me do his benevolence justice, Mr. Levi in the handsomest way apologised for not having had the horse *roughed*; adding that, as he had no other call to make that morning, “he was not in no ’urry.”

Friendly reader, as an officer and a gentleman, I protest to you that I would not have even thus casually alluded to personal adventures did they not in the most striking, and I may add in the most pathetic manner illustrate the condition of a man who, with a military flame burning in his breast, generously offers his fire in the cause of nations. I might proceed; but the same modesty that has hitherto confined me to the rank of Captain—and I may here allude to an infamous conspiracy on the part of the publisher and printers of the *Army List*, my name, as I have been informed, having been maliciously omitted from that miscellany—the same modesty ties up my tongue on my own sufferings, my own deserts; or at most but lets it move in fitful murmurings. I have done! To proceed.

In the Army what are the hopes for superabundant young gentlemen, too spirited to starve, and too nice to dig? What, I ask, can be their hopes when a hypocritical sentimentality is gaining ground amongst those who are pleased to call themselves thinking men—a whining, sneaking abuse of glory and all its mighty purposes? There is a whimpering, white-faced cowardice that would extract all the stern immortal beauty from the battlefield, showing it to be no other than a place of butchery; that would display the valiant soldier with his throat cut, his bowels gloriously protruding, as a horrible sight—a piece of sacrilege done by man upon his fellow. And more than this, the same cant lifts up its face of turnip pallor, and pointing to where ten or twelve thousand stalwart fellows lie magnificently dead in blood and mire, has the effrontery to ask *cui bono*, as my old school-master used to say—to put the impudent “*What’s the good of it?*” I should abuse the ingenuousness of the young martial spirit were I to be silent on the innovation of this wicked principle; a principle which, with the infamous invention of the steam gun and the unhallowed introduction of the rocket brigade, will go far, or Captain Whitefeather is no prophet, to utterly destroy what I was once proud to think the instinct for war in the “paragon of animals.” There is something inconceivably cowardly in the steam gun. Possessed of such engines, neither party will fight; and thus, nations always prepared for war, will hold continual peace. They will, so to speak, treat and deliberate at “full cock”; and being always ready, will never fire. Is not this, I ask, a lamentable state of the world for a man to be born in? Let us, however, unflinchingly look truth in the face; by so doing we shall be the better prepared for the evil days at hand, which to enable men to meet with some serenity of mind is the high purpose of this essay.

Such days are nearer, much nearer, than those who have capital in powder mills like to dream of. We shall, of course, continue to keep a small standing army; but blank cartridges for birthdays will be the only order from the Horse Guards: bullets will become as rare as brilliants; whole tons of the death-dealing lead being sold to the type-founders. Laurel, "the meed of mighty conquerors"—why a whole grove of it will in the coming time be held of no more account, nay, of not so much, as a handful of dried marjoram. Have I dreamt it, or did I at a late philosophical meeting see a grave, pragmatic man rise from his seat, and when up, did I or did I not hear him seriously put it as a motion—that the planet Mars should be no longer called Mars, but be known to all future generations as JAMES WATT?

The Army, then, affords no refuge for the tens of thousands up to within these few years begotten, christened, suckled, nursed, fondled, schooled, petted, sported with, wept over by fathers and mothers, uncles and aunts, grandfathers and grandmothers, for the glorious purposes of war. In such case is it not, I ask, the highest purpose of the philanthropist to find employment for men, who in happier times might have been usefully employed in burning the cottages of our enemies, lessening the numbers of our enemies' children (thus nipping a foe in the bud) on lances and bayonets, tearing up olive groves, carrying away the vanity of plate and pictures from enemies' churches, and in fire, and blood, and terror, planting the immortal bay? Since the British lion is no longer to be fed upon Frenchmen's flesh, since he is henceforth to have a regimen of bread and milk and dates, it behoves us to see that he be gradually and duly prepared for the change in his diet, lest consumption fall upon him; or, a still greater point, lest he break all bonds and spread dismay around.

I have now, I trust, convincingly proved that the many asylums hitherto open to the pious, the wise, and the brave, are most inconveniently crammed ; and that with less room for an increasing generation, the crowds will consequently become more dense, more clamorous, and in a word, more revolutionary. What is the remedy in this great natural crisis?

In one word make I answer—"Swindling!"

The philosophy of the present time is remarkable for its contempt—nay, for its wholesome abhorrence of poverty. A want of the luxuries of life is not merely inconvenient, it is positively ignominious. Hence what wriggings, and strugglings, and heartburnings are every day acted and endured, to stand well with the world; that is, to stand without a hole in our hat or a damning rent in our small clothes! The modern man is wonderfully spiritualised by this philosophy ; so much so that if he can secure to himself a display of the collar he is almost wholly unconscious of the absence of the shirt. Indeed so deep and so widely spread is this sentiment that the present time might be denominated the Age of Collars.

This spirit is on the advance ; and it is the consciousness of this truth that impresses upon me the necessity of publishing a system by the adoption of which the country may be saved from a desolating revolution, and tens of thousands of future generations be secured those benefits and enjoyments which, as the sons of Adam, they are justified in expecting from the fulness of time.

I have proved, at least to my own satisfaction—a great sustaining point with an author—proved that by the natural course of things multitudes of generous spirits, before devoted to the professions, will be thrown upon their own resources—a dreadful condition for most men. What is

to become of them? They cannot sink down into petty hucksters; railroads have destroyed the race of pedlars; they must not, even if they had sufficient moral courage, hold forth their white hands as mendicants; and if, stung by the injustice of society, they should in a moment of exasperation take to the road, why, highwaymen, save and except the highwaymen of fifty years ago, cease to be picturesque; and there is another heavy discouragement—the barbarous institution of a rural police. These fiery souls—the unemployed, superabundant young gentlemen—must, then, become knight-errants; that is, they must institute an order of chivalry peculiar to the age, and the best calculated to meet the wants of the sufferers. Let us take a single knight.

Here is Peter Muddleton, son of Jonah Muddleton, greengrocer, Houndsditch. Jonah Muddleton dies, leaving Peter heir to the goodwill of his shop, with seven hundred pounds in the three per cents. Well, had Peter fallen upon a less ambitious age, he would have tied his apron around him, walked behind the counter, and, saving a new coat of red and yellow paint bestowed upon the outside of the shop, and the substitution of “Peter” for “Jonah,” things would have gone on even as when Muddleton senior was in the flesh. Peter, however, has a spirit above ha’porths of starch and pen’orths of pepper; and having, as he most potently believes, a gentlemanly taste, resolves to do anything that may become a gentleman, but certainly not keep to a shop. The seven hundred pounds, to Peter’s real astonishment, become in a brief time about eight hundred shillings. A little month and Peter is penniless. What is to be done? Is Peter to be blamed for the spirit of the age? Could he, the hapless son of a vulgar sire, stultify himself to the fascinating and exalting appeals of an advancing era? No: he is, in the first instance, the victim

of over-refinement, and his moral perceptions having been rendered painfully acute to the degradation of a shop, and his physical man far too thin-skinned for the labour of Adam—and, moreover, having not a sixpence, and seeing no gentlemanly mode of obtaining that much-abused yet most necessary little coin—he magnanimously resolves to eat and drink the best, and to wear the costliest, and all—without it. This is the determination of a genius: but even the most consummate wit may be assisted by the experience of others, and it would be a sorry affectation in me—it would be worse, it would be a gross injustice to my fellow-creatures—to deny that from my own observation of life I am incapable of the dearest services to young gentlemen so curiously placed as Peter Muddleton.

I have taken a single case; I have adduced one of the humblest examples; I already see a hundred thousand, many varying in their original rank in life; but all, at length, compelled by the spirit of the age to take their stand upon the broad ground of—SWINDLING.

All commercial operations of the present, and certainly of the future age, do and will tend to place the whole wealth of the country in a few hands. I am not vain enough to suppose that this book will enjoy a large daily sale for more than a hundred years; with all the partiality of an author, I cannot bring myself to expect that the state of society—whose wants the work is to meet—will endure above another century. However, I shall have done my duty, and I may safely leave the year 2000 to the active philanthropy of other WHITEFEATHERS. For more than the next hundred years there must, if my previous hypotheses are allowed, be an enormous amount of intelligence unemployed by the professions; the tangible fat of the land becoming every year engrossed by a smaller number. Now, to prevent any

violent partition of property, it is—I can lay my hand on my heart and vow it—it is my purpose to make the few contribute in the easiest and pleasantest way to the wants of the many. Briefly, it is my object to show to the elegant unemployed how they may successfully and safely swindle the shopkeeping minority. The whole system is reduced into a trial of wit; and if the swindler be a man of real genius, and the man swindled have a touch of generous feeling in him, he will forget what might be vulgarly called a loss in admiration of his conqueror. I have seen much of shopkeeping nature; and I am convinced that a man properly, wholly, and withal delicately swindled—where there have been no rubs or hitches in the work—that a man who, with all his eyes and ears about him, has nevertheless, without his knowing it, been turned, “like a chevril glove,” inside out by the professor—that such a man, after the first burst of disappointment, feels but little of the bitterness of resentment; the small drop of gall in his heart is speedily taken up, and by a process delightful for the benevolent mind to consider, is assimilated to the milk of human kindness still running in the ventricles of the swindled; who—I have known such an instance—after a moody, savage look, will burst into a laugh, slap his leg, and with a confident, yea, with an exulting voice, declare that “no less a swindler could ever have swindled *him*.” Here is a homage—an irresistible token of admiration—paid to one man; and if we consider, in proportion to the possessions of the others, how small, how trivial has been the tribute levied upon him, a positive enjoyment afforded to another! Believe it, reader, the swindled, if well swindled, is not without his joy.

This maxim is never to be lost sight of by the pupil. If he would disarm a man of the natural ferocity of the animal when fobbed, he must fob him blandly, graciously, com-

pletely. Humanity—a consideration of the feelings of others—demands this. How often have we seen a worthy man in a very tempest of passion—his face like copper—his eyes starting—his tongue stammering his wrongs:—“The—the—the—infamous scoundrel!—the barefaced villain! Did he think I was to be done in that way? Did he think me a fool?”

There it is, take the good man's goods; but, in the taking, see you never wound his self-love.

CHAPTER III.

Of the face necessary to a swindler—(an incidental speculation on the “division of property”)—and of the use and abuse of mustachios.

It is a homely expression, often used in reply to a sarcasm on a personal deformity, “that we did not make ourselves.” Not even a Professor of Political Economy can argue away this conviction, rooted as it is in the depths of the human heart. Much, however, can be done with the rude lump—if indeed it be rude—whereof man finds himself the ill-starred possessor. Hence, let no one moderately deformed despair of his fitness to join our brotherhood. Hump backs, club feet, and bow shins have, it must be owned, their disadvantages for the service—notwithstanding, the genius of their owners may triumph over such outward obstacles. A fine face tastefully set in hair may be considered a blessing for the profession; yet it would be to inflict a great injustice on the higher uses of the science to suppose a mere face so framed all-sufficient. No; “we work by wit and not by whiskers.” The outward man goes

far, but he must depend upon the ethereal spark—upon the inward intelligence—for self-distinction.

And first for the *FACE OF A SWINDLER*. Men who set themselves up as judges of character—I have heard the sciolists—sometimes marvel that the sons of commerce should so frequently fall victims to some individual swindler; when he, the party swindling, is one of the most ingenuous creatures breathing; looking, in fact, the swindler that he is,—when from his eyebrows to the corners of his lips there is painted in the largest human capitals the calling of the professor. The truth is, the unsuspecting men accustomed to pore over day-books and ledgers have not had sufficient time to learn to read human faces. They can on the instant, if put to the test, tell a good guinea from a bad one; but though they shall stare in the features of a human counterfeit for an hour or more, they cannot, one in a hundred, discover the washed brass from the true gold. More; though they shall hear the counterfeit—though the ring of its voice shall be the truest Brummagem—the trading man shall complacently rub his hands, satisfied that he is hearing the sweetest sound of the mint.

I confess it, to the honour of the trading community of this commercial country, I confess it; the success of some faces of my brotherhood upon men behind counters has been to me startling evidence of the unsophisticated character of the tradesman. For instance; there is Nobrowns, Scarceamag, Fleeceington, and others I could name—shall I own it?—I have sometimes felt myself humiliated by their prosperity. I have felt the science lowered by the facility with which they have ingratiated themselves into the favour of the jeweller, the coachmaker, the tailor. Had I kept shop, I have thought I should have shown Nobrowns to the door at the first glance of his

eye ; and without looking at Scarceamag, but simply hearing his base-metal voice, I should have told him I had nothing in his way, and straightway ordered him across the threshold. And yet these men have flourished for a score of years ; and, at this moment, are prosperous swindlers. How is the enigma to be explained—how the more than Arcadian innocency of the dwellers in Bond Street and Regent Street to be philosophically accounted for ? Is it, that men immersed in the profound abstraction of £ s. d. lose somewhat of the sagacity inherited and often improved by poorer souls ; that, too much rapt by the splendid visions of the future profits, they are less vigilant as to the danger of present credit ? Providence, however, hath wisely partitioned its benefits. If it be given to Scarceamag, with *his* face, to swindle and be poor—it is also allotted to Puddingtête, the tradesman, to be swindled and grow rich. Take this, then, my dear pupil, for an axiom : you may—since you cannot help it—look the greatest swindler in life ; but if you shall hold your own counsel, your face shall, at least to the acute men behind counters, never reveal it. Tradesmen can read anything but customers' faces.¹ This truth is every day borne out by the success of fellows whose features have gone far to vulgarise the science. Ragamuffins who ought never to have aspired beyond the pea-and-thimble board at a country fair

¹ I can scarcely believe that Captain Whitefeather was a reader of the Essays of David Hume ; and yet a similar opinion—a friend of mine, a poor curate to whom I showed the Captain's MS., pointed it out to me—is expressed by the sceptic philosopher, who, in his Essay on "Delicacy of Taste," says :—"You will seldom find that mere men of the world, whatever strong sense they may be endowed with, are very nice in distinguishing characters, or in marking those insensible differences and gradations which make one man preferable to another."—[JOHN JACKDAW, Ed.]

—knaves marked and impressed by the truthful hand of nature for the lowest offices of legerdemain have, trusting to the simplicity, the unsuspecting ingenuousness of a money-getting generation, to the marvellous innocence of the commercial body, made for themselves a reputation of the first class, or of very nearly the first class of the highest profession. Ultimately, in the advancement of society, these vulgar upstarts will be met by a greater number of competitors, elevated and accomplished with the graces of life, and the term swindler will be, as it ought to be, synonymous with gentleman. The commercial faculty will, on the other hand, be rendered more acute in its observation of human character; hence it will require a greater delicacy of style—more imposing and a more winning manner to arrive at any distinction—indeed, even to make a clear paltry five hundred a year as a swindler, than in these times will suffice to ensure to a tolerably industrious man an income of a thousand. This is inevitable. When the tens of thousands of noble spirits, heretofore absorbed by the professions, are left to trade upon their wits—when all society is more strongly marked, more arbitrarily divided into two classes, the swindlers and the swindled—when, instead of a violent and ruthless division of property, as infamously as ignorantly insisted upon by certain firebrands—there is a graceful exchange of elegant patronage on the one side, and a profound expression of thanksgiving respect on the other, the character of the successful swindler will rise to its ordained and natural elevation, and a Whitefeather (pardon the honest vanity) take his place with many illustrious names sufficiently obvious to the philosophical reader. The time is happily passing away when brute violence is to achieve national good—when the price of bread is to be beaten down by a bludgeon, or wages raised upon a pike. It is

therefore a matter of deep regret to the contemplative man, and such I am not ashamed to confess myself, to perceive how many gifted persons are, by a premature nativity, ill-placed. How many men at the present day breathing national arson and patriotic pillage—men who have so profoundly studied the *meum*, that they are entirely ignorant of that of *tuum*—would, born a few years hence, have shed a lustre, have conferred a dignity upon even an illustrious and dignified profession. Let me not be asked to enumerate examples—I eschew the personal for the general. It is enough that the eye of the philosopher can perceive in many a sulphureous patriot the indefatigable swindler; that the sage, pondering on the inevitable changes of society, can detect in a present Bull-ring Brutus all the misapplied qualities of a future Isaac Solomons!

Blissful time—glorious return of the golden age—when rapine and fire, and cutting and maiming shall no longer be the evils adopted by comprehensive minds to work out, as they conceive, a great good; but when one half of the people shall live peaceably upon the other; when the whole aim and end of every two men out of four shall be to possess themselves of their daily bread—(philosophers will receive the phrase in its more enlarged meaning)—by an art demanding in its exercise the highest and most chastened faculties of the moral creature. The two halves of society will then be fairly arrayed against each other; and for ruthless weapons—for sword, dagger, and pistol on one side, and bayonet, sabre, and carbine on the other—we shall have the more peaceful and courteous instruments, silvery words, blandest smiles, and the happiest self-possession, opposed by cautious interrogation, wary looks and silent heavy doubtings. Here then is a contest worthy of intellectual beings! This is indeed a duello of the immortal principle! How poor,

how savage, how unworthy of a rational creature to break into the peaceful dwelling of an honest silversmith—to fire his bed-curtains—to bruise and batter his ornate cream-jugs, his chased candlesticks, and embossed tankards,—or, the spoil carried off amidst the exulting howl of barbarians, to fling it into the hospitable melting-pot—how loathsome, how degrading this brutal mode of a division of property, to that refined and gracious system, the cunning birth of better times—the fruit of a loftier and truer consideration of man's dignity towards his fellow!

Let us consider the two pictures; let us contemplate the working of the different principles. How revolting the scene of violence! How debasing to our common nature to witness a mob of denaturalised creatures bursting in the good man's door! How they scamper upstairs! Like festal savages they wave firebrands and torches about their heads as they rush into the sacred bedroom. The worthy man says a short prayer, and thinks of his stock—his wife and daughters, trembling for their lives, are horrified at being seen in nightcaps with their hair in paper! All the house is in consternation; and, a touch of humanity softening the mob, they benevolently suffer the silversmith and his family to escape, in their night-clothes, over the roof, and descend, like cats, into the gutter of their neighbour. The shop is ransacked of everything; and now a sanguinary fight is going on behind the counter between two of the ruffians for the plated top of a pepper-castor. This—this is one principle of a division of property; as if property was only to be divided by the blaze of torches and the crackling of rafters! Turn we to the ennobling contrast.

Mark the swindler! How graciously he descends from his chariot—for the swindler of first-rate genius rarely marauds on foot—and with what a composed elegance, with what a

perfect self-possession he enters the shop! There is something inexpressibly taking in his manner. Surveying him from head to foot, we cannot repress the opinion that the "age of chivalry" is *not* past. He is the knight of later times—the Chevalier Bayard in a round hat. *Sans peur* glows in his eyeball, and the whiteness of his kid gloves is *sans reproche!* Two or three centuries ago he had, with mailed hand, "shaken the bags of hoarding abbots," and now comes he, with a condescending smile at his mouth, to deal with a silversmith. See! he crosses the threshold—treads the shop. It is impossible to resist the fascination of his lofty courtesy. The tradesman, wary as he is—suspicious as loss after loss has made him—despite of himself, confesses the supremacy of the stranger, and, with a smiling lip, a twinkling eye, folded palms, and inclined back, politely receives his destroyer. A conversation ensues; and the swindler—I am of course putting the case of a man of genius—fastens upon the tradesman, who every moment becomes more deeply impressed with the consequence of his patron; and therefore, having flung to the winds all low suspicion, is the most obsequious, the most humble servant of the swindler. There is nothing too costly for him—nothing too curious; no order too difficult to be met—no time too short for the accomplishment of his wishes. The swindler is evidently a man of the very highest consequence; and the silversmith, if I may adopt a homely expression, is inevitably *done*, ay, done—

"—as brown as a berry."¹

The swindler whirls away from the tradesman, who has attended him, bareheaded, to the kerbstone, and then the

¹ It will be seen that the Captain had some knowledge of Chaucer.
—[JOHN JACKDAW, Ed.]

man of precious metals returns to his shop in that delightful serenity of mind, apt, I am told, to possess people with profits ranging from fifty to seventy-five in the hundred.

What—it will be asked—what, does Mr. Giltspur, the silversmith, without further questions put, trust his service of plate, besides a magnificent suite of amethysts (for which the honourable Mr. Thug expressed a sudden liking), to the honour of his customer? To be sure he does; and his blood simmering with a sense of profit, he orders them to be delivered at “—— Hotel,” where Mr. Thug is staying; but which delightful and convenient hostelry he, shortly afterwards, suddenly leaves on the most imperative business. A thousand instances bear out the probability of Thug’s success and Giltspur’s discomfiture. People may talk about the innocence of a pastoral age: I am, from long experience, convinced of it, that the most innocent, the most unsuspecting, the most easily-taken biped on the face of the earth is—your London shopkeeper. Armed with proper weapons, it is almost impossible that he can escape you. The poor creature is weakness, imbecility itself; “Wear your eye thus,” and as surely as the fluttering bird drops into the mouth of the snake, as surely fall the tribe of Giltspurs into the folds of the Thugs.

Well, and is it not delightful that it should be so? Here is Giltspur, for a certain number of days at least, made very happy; he has delivered his goods, and has already calculated to the odd sevenpence-halfpenny the amount of profit. Thug has conferred upon him a great pleasure—passing, it must be owned—but sweet, very sweet, whilst it endures.

Does the reader still remember the picture of violence drawn in a former page? Does he still behold the pallid silversmith—his fainting wife—and blushing daughters?

Does he yet hear the roar of the flames, as they come up the staircase—the fury of pillage in the shop below?

The same effect is produced by the swindler, but how different the cause! The “division of property” is just as complete—the fine, deep philosophy that preaches it equally well honoured; and yet, what grace on one side—what civility on the other; and, to one party at least, what tangible, enduring satisfaction! Who, then, with the smallest spark of human dignity within him would stoop to violence when he may “divide” with ease? The “multiplication” of the human animal is, indeed, according to the modern school-men, “vexation”; but the “division” of property—unless divided on the bland principles of swindling—would be infinitely worse. In the progress of society, then, it is by swindling, and by swindling only, that we shall escape the most grievous revolution.

To proceed with the personal qualifications necessary to a Swindler. He must have a face of purest brass. It handsome, all the better; yet, perhaps, expression is of greater importance than the mere proportion of feature. If, however, he *look* a Swindler—if to the contemplative men who peruse human lines, printed in the blackest ink on some human faces, he look his profession—his success with the sages of trade is certain. It is, however, of the first importance that there should be no alloy in the face. It should, for instance, be as incapable of emotion as the bull hide on the shield of Ajax.¹ This, youthful Swindler, is the besetting danger; hence, bend all your energies to obtain a stony look of self-possession. Though a constable should put his “dead hand” upon your shoulder, and your very marrow

¹ I may, by the way, observe that the Captain, whose education was not equal to his parts, is indebted for a few of his classical allusions to another pen.—[JOHN JACKDAW, Ed.]

should thrill at the touch—your face must remain motionless as the face of the Apollo Belvidere—your eye unquenched—your voice with not a crack in it. I will not disguise the difficulties of arriving at this superhuman placidity. Talk of the self-possession of a Cæsar—the coolness of a Napoleon—quackery all ! What is there in the composure of a man who takes snuff whilst hundreds of other men's limbs are being blown into the air (to be wept over by the spirits of glory), with at the most a *sauve qui peut* for it ; whilst, in the scale of advantage, there is a laurel wreath and a triumphant entry and civic addresses,—what is all this to the quiet dignity demanded of a swindler in a perilous situation—his splendid cabriolet, perhaps, waiting at the shop—whilst, sneaked out at the back door, Bob the apprentice has run for Police Officer Snatchem, F. No. 20, to attend immediately to our hero, who at his approach beholds a no dim vision of the very handsome police omnibus—the prison barber with his ignominious shears—and hears, or thinks he hears, the pathetic, admonitory address of Common Sergeant or Recorder ? It may, according to a worn metaphor, take nerves of iron to direct an army ; but they must be brass, and of the finest brass too, to swindle. Fighting is, indeed, a mechanic trade ; millions can fight,—but how few can gracefully swindle ! We know that the result of both operations is often the same, but how inferior one to the other ! Buonaparte brought a *few* pictures from Italy, which the world—Heaven knows !—made noise enough about. In warlike phrase, he “took them” from a vanquished people : a poor, shabby act to brag of ; but had he, unassisted by squadrons and battalions, and parks of artillery—had he, by the unassisted efforts of his own mind, with no other masked battery, no other weapon than his own hand and his own tongue,—had he robbed one dealer

of a Correggio—another of a Raphael—a third of a Titian—a fourth of a Murillo—and so on,—it had indeed been an achievement to boast of; but to crack of the incident as one of the trophies of the army of Italy was the sublime of gasconading! My late friend Featherfinger—he died, poor fellow, having burst a blood-vessel from intense study at Macquarrie Harbour—had a magnificent bronze clock; a superb thing! a thing to make a man value time. Had I not pledged my honour to secrecy, I could write a history touching his possession of that clock, which, of itself, is enough to immortalise any one man. My honour, however, is sacred; and my lips are hushed. This much, probably, I may be permitted to observe: The industry—nay, that is a poor, unworthy term—the genius manifested by the indefatigable Featherfinger to possess that clock—methinks I see him now; poor fellow! seated with his Greek cap, his black satin morning gown figured with pink poppies—an Indian shawl (the *gage d'amour* of an Italian countess) about his waist—his feet in bead-embroidered slippers, the work, as he protested, of some heart-devoted heiress—his meerschaum in his mouth—in his hand a book, *Satan* or the *Lives of Highwaymen* (for he was passionately fond of light literature)—his tiger page, only three feet high, and warranted to grow no taller, in green and gold, with a breast-plate of best double gilt buttons, standing at a reverential distance—whilst the bronze clock on the mantelpiece vibrated with its monitory, moralising—yes, moralising—*tick, tick!* Methinks I see him as I enter raise one eye from the page, nod, smile—and such a smile!—there was only one shopkeeper, and he was a philosophical member of the Society of Friends and dealer in *virtu*, that ever stood against it—smile, and then cast the other eye towards the clock itself with a look of touching reproach at my delay, or with a glance of

approving pleasure at my punctuality. Methinks I see him—Gracious powers! That such a man should die at Macquarrie Harbour, taxed beyond his strength of study, a victim to—but no; loyalty to the Ministry was ever a virtue of the White-feathers, and I breathe no word against the Whigs! To hurry from the theme. Much has been said about the boldness, the fine contempt of public opinion shown by Napoleon when he took the horses of St. Mark from Venice to place them on his own palace gate in Paris. Well, the act was not without its merit, but did I dare to write the story of Featherfinger's clock, the theft of Napoleon would, in comparison to the genius manifested by my friend, sink to the petty larceny committed by schoolboys upon apple stalls. But so it is; the finest history remains, and ever will remain, unwritten. The Venice horses have been celebrated by poets and historians, but posterity is left to bewilder itself with guesses on Featherfinger's clock. Yet—and I am prepared to meet the consequences of such an assertion—I am convinced that great as the conqueror was in all the varieties of the science, Buonaparte's horses must pass from the recollection of the earth; whereas Featherfinger's clock, duly chronicled, was a thing for time! It may be cited as an illustration of the injustice of Fortune—of the tricks she plays with the noble and the man—when the reader is informed that the tiger page of my dear friend—of him whose bones are mouldering (for he *was* buried) in a foreign earth—of him born, as the poet says—

“To steal a grace beyond the reach of art”—

that that little cab-page—that tiger-moth fluttering as I have seen him with *billet-doux* about the carriage-lamps and round the torches of an opera night,—that he has at this moment a country-seat and grounds at Hackney,

purchased and supported by the precarious profits of a night-house—that is, of a mansion hospitably open in the vicinity of Drury Lane, for the refreshment of travellers with beer, beef, and oysters, from eleven at night until six in the morning. But so it is; a genius, like my departed friend, dies beggared at the last; whilst mere industry at forty-five grows his own pine apples!

I have, I trust, been sufficiently minute in my description of the face requisite to be put upon Swindling. In conclusion, I have only to enforce the necessity of the most rigid self-discipline to prevent even the most evanescent exhibition of what is conventionally called modesty; for the swindler who can blush is lost. His must be a brow whereon

“Shame is ashamed to sit.”

A money-lender, a courtier, steeped to the lips in broken promises—a pick-pocket caught in the act, all of these may, if they can, blush and not be ruined; but woe to the swindler whose cheek admits the self-accusing tint! His face, like the face of the man in the moon, must look down upon all sorts of acted abominations, yet blench not.

MUSTACHIOS.—These *were* pretty things for the profession; but I grieve to say it, lawyers' clerks, linen-drapers' apprentices, players out of place, and even pedestrian vendors of lucifer matches, have detracted from their exclusive importance; hence, I would counsel the youthful, sanguine swindler to eschew what indeed vulgar usage has rendered a very questionable advantage, and to swindle with clean lips. It is enough to break the heart of a rabbi to see how one of “Heaven's best gifts,” the human beard, is in these hirsute days cut and notched according to the impudence or ignorance of the wearer. It is said of the French that they have a thousand ways of cooking an

egg: let it be our boast that we have as many modes of dressing the chin. I have, I hope, a love of the picturesque, as the world will one day know from a work of mine still, unhappily, in manuscript.¹ I, therefore, am a passionate admirer of the beard of patriarchal growth; but for your nasty, stunted, straggly, ragged, edgy things—now like the skin of a dog with the mange, now like the end of a skein of whitey-brown thread, now as if culled from chopped hay, and now as if cut from a singed blanket—pah!—were I caliph for a day—but no matter, let me not wander to legislation, but stick to my higher subject—Swindling. I say, then, to my disciple, eschew mustachios. At best they are a doubtful good. If, however, you are determined to wear them, let me hope that their hue is black as death. If, on the contrary, Heaven has awarded you a pair of pale gold or deep carrot colour, tamper not with them, but shave. Never, like Richard, think to stand “the hazard of the *die*,” if so, your case is desperate. I knew three promising young fellows, all of whom laid their ruin at the door of Mr. Rowland. But—for I like to anticipate—it may be asked, Do you always, Captain Whitefeather, walk abroad with unrazored lips? To this I boldly answer that—for I was justified in the vanity—I did wear an adorned mouth; more, that a lady, who shall be nameless, was in hysterics (of course at intervals) for three days, when my mustachios fell; but no, I could not condescend to wear them when I saw—yes, I confess it—even a better pair than my own upon the face of a fellow in the Surrey gallery, selling play-bills, Spanish nuts, and ginger beer. What the revolution of society may in time produce it would of course be impudence in me, who am not a Paternoster Row

¹ *The Handbook of Ratcliffe Highway*, an inestimable work (when printed) for the stranger in London.—[JOHN JACKDAW, Ed.]

astrologer, to declare ; but, for the next five-and-twenty years, mustachios will, I think, be a dangerous decoration for the swindler. So much business has been done with them that suspicion will have scarcely subsided under at least another quarter of a century. The horse-tails of Ibrahim Pacha have not been more triumphant ; but victory will not always perch upon the same banner.

The swindler should not at the present day hope to take the Philistines by the strength of his hair. No ; let him shave, and put the barest face upon the dignity of his profession—it cannot be *too* bare.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the parentage and name of a Swindler—of his equipage—of his moral philosophy.

THE professor of our distinguished art has, it must be conceded, this peculiar and most grateful advantage—he may choose his ancestors. With the *Peerage* or the *Red Book* open before him, it lies within his own breast to decide whether he shall have come from the loins of a Norman baron—of one of the boldest of that invincible band of marauders and thieves who jumped on Hastings beach—or whether he shall be the last of a collateral branch of the Strozzi, or Frangepani, or of any other Italian house whose beginning, in the opinion of divers heralds, dates from beyond Numa. Here is a glorious prerogative ! The swindler may make his own coat-of-arms, although his immediate father walked the earth without a shirt. Show

me any other man possessing so delicious a privilege. With long rolls of knights and barons, and earls and princes before him, how the swindler may play the epicure with the mighty dead! How loftily, yet how serenely, may he contemplate the titled dust of bygone generations! Even as your dainty snuff-taker coquets with a dozen samples of the odoriferous tobacco, so may the swindler, pondering on a choice of father and mother, taste with his moral sense the various claims of buried greatness. Now, he likes this Prince's mixture—and now this. He is puzzled, perplexed by the hundred appeals to his filial affection. He is one minute determined to have come from the Montmorencys—the next, he feels a yearning towards the Talbots—and in a few seconds, lo! he will make a kindred to himself from the golden line of D'Este. If the reader possess imagination—and if he do not I tremble for my book—he must sympathise with the delightful tumult in the swindler's brain and breast, or rather brain alone—(for with your true swindler the brain must have played the Aaron's rod with the heart, swallowing it whole; a miracle very often performed in the anatomy of great public men)—he must feel more than commonly interested in the contest which is to decide the parentage of our hero. With this allusion to the delicacy of the juncture, we leave the swindler at his books, merely impressing upon him the necessity of choosing a long way back—of electing an ancestor from some by-way catacomb—some seldom visited cemetery—some “untrod on corner i' the earth.” Nor let him despair; there are at least a round thousand or two of dukes and princes sufficiently obscure in their winding-sheets, albeit possibly brave and blatant enough when in the flesh, from whom the swindler may scratch out a great progenitor. All that is necessary is that the beginner of the family shall

have lived in the dim twilight of civilisation—that he shall be so far away that all the Heralds' Colleges, with all their spectacles upon their collective noses, shall not be able to perceive whether the disentombed thing be flesh or phantom. Very satisfactory progenitors have been found, with arms to match, of thew and sinew just as questionable. If, however, the swindler *will* have a mighty ancestor, let him, I repeat, go far enough for him: when a man wants a marquis, or an earl, or a count, for his great-grandfather, he should not grudge a long walk—even though he walk blindfold and backwards—for the commodity. So much for the ambitious swindler.

The swindler, however, who trusts to his unassisted genius, and disdains the lustre of any specious trophies from the churchyard, may with a very laudable pride refuse to make to himself a grandfather, being possibly contented with the grandsire selected by his grandmother for him. Some men—and let me do all homage to their simplicity—turn up their noses at the genealogical tree, even though its roots were struck at Tyburn: the swindler of sanguine spirit may be of this proud kidney; and all the better: I augur more of his ultimate triumph. However, though he shall refuse a herald-begotten progenitor, it may be highly necessary for him that he shall choose a name. His own may have become celebrated for family achievements wide away of his purpose; and therefore, whilst with filial affection he sticks to his own father and mother, disdaining the blood of Norman, Guelph, or Ghibelline—it may be imperative upon him to assume a nominal device not hitherto borne by any of his kin. The swindler wants a name. Here, then, we approach a delicate, yes, a difficult point. Let me, however, set out with a solemn injunction to the swindler, that in the choice of a name “he throw away ambition.” Considerable nicety

is required in the selection of a good title for swindling ; a number of fine young fellows having—if I may lighten the solemnity of this essay with a familiar phrase—"let the cat out of the bag" by the incautious assumption of a high-sounding, flowery, no-meaning patronymic. The truth is, the detestable rage for novels has so familiarised the world with a set of sugar-and-water heroes—of exquisite gentlemen, all of them worthy of a glass case lest the flies should soil them—that their very excess of virtue has put them on the *hue and cry* of suspicion. Hence "*Delacour*," "*Erpingham*," "*Rosenthorp*," "*Millefleur*," and a thousand others of the courtly and sweet-smelling class, all in their time excellent names for swindling (that is, for swindling in the higher sense of the term, for in "fine wire wove" they swindle still), are now no other than brands, *stigmata*, by which the calling of the professor is instantly suspected. Hence, my dear pupil, take no sweet, pastry-cook name from a novel ; cull no flower from a play-bill ; but look, as either a poet or a member of Parliament says, I forget which, "look abroad into universality" for the thing desired. As you walk the street cast your eyes above the door of the worthy shop-keeper. A thousand to one that in a day's saunter you will possess yourself, and from such a source, of a name in every respect unexceptionable. Yes, from the board of the thriving, honest, painstaking, till-respecting tradesman. And if so, how ingenious, how pleasant withal, to obtain one of your best weapons from, so to speak, the armoury of the enemy, to be fleshed immediately upon him ! It is perhaps unnecessary to warn the young swindler that he must not be too homely in his choice. There is a class of names which, from their very abundance, makes it a matter of constructive ignominy to swindle under them. And some of these are Jones, Walsh, Welsh, Thomson, Johnson,

Dobson, White, Brown, Williams, Simpson, Smithson, and that multitudinous monosyllable, Smith! If, in a moment of hilarity you break a lamp, wrench off a knocker, or snap a bell wire, why any one of these names may be, as of course every gentleman well knows, confidently given in to the night constable; but to attempt to swindle under them betrays a petty larceny spirit in the professor, from which my experience looks for little present gain or future reputation. No; the name of a swindler should be like the wardrobe of the true gentleman—a thing not challenging vulgar attention; but, if examined, found to be of the very best material and of the choicest workmanship. Hence let the swindler choose between a *clinquant* (I do believe this is almost the first bit of French appearing in the essay, for the which I confess myself deficient in the graces of modern literature¹), between the *clinquant* of novel heroes and the homeliness of “base mechanics”—let his name be a solid, substantial, downright English name.

I say English, for I think we have had too long a peace to render the assumption of a foreign title and a foreign accent worth the trouble, the incessant watchfulness, the continual stretch of a man's intellects: the call upon his faculties to keep up the character should be well rewarded, for the hazard of self-discovery is very great. I know a remarkable instance of the danger. There was Thaddeus Ballynamuck—he once, with merely a backward touch of his hand, broke the jaw of the manager of a minor theatre who dared to offer him terms to bring him out as a Patagonian giant—there was Thaddeus, who had made a splendid six weeks' campaign at the West-end as an Italian count; how admirably did he with the

¹ The Captain is in error. Though his essay is, assuredly, barren of “the tongues,” the author knows more of bookmaking than he apparently chooses to confess.—[JOHN JACKDAW, Ed.]

lingua Toscana flavour his native Connaught! The Duke of Tuscany was his dear friend; and not without reason; for Thaddeus at a boar hunt had stood between the boar and the duke, receiving the tusks of the beast in his hunting jacket, for the which he had obtained a great many Italian orders, and on the strength of which he gave a great many English ones. Well, Thaddeus, though considered as true an Italian as the poet Asso,¹ was one morning driven to the necessity of shaving himself, changing his southern name, and retiring for a few weeks to the privacy of Southend. He was betrayed into self-discovery by an excess of benevolence—the more was the pity. Thus it was. He always carried in his cab a beautiful dove-coloured Italian greyhound, its legs not much thicker than goose quills, and its tail like bent wire—the gift of the Marchesa di Lungabarba. The dog had leaped from the cab and followed its master into the office of Finings, the wine merchant. Thaddeus had before very considerably patronised Finings, and was about to give him a splendid order for some choice port to be shipped to his friend the duke—and how the eyes of Finings twinkled at the title of his highness!—when the cellarman, a brawny, heavy fellow from Somerset, shambled into the office and trod, with all his fourteen stone, upon the delicate toes of Angelo the greyhound: the dog howled with agony piercing enough to crack the parchment heart of an old maid, when the Captain—he was, at the moment, with the greatest difficulty endeavouring to make himself understood to the wine merchant—turned round, and, to the astonishment of Finings, fulminating a string of oaths in the very purest Connaught, dealt a blow on the breast of the cellarman that sent him prostrate on three dozen of choice brandy—picked samples for the dowager Lady

¹ The Captain doubtless means Tasso.—[JOHN JACKDAW, Ed.]

Drinkwater—to their utter destruction, and to the exceeding surprise of the wine merchant, who had never in all his life heard an Italian count vituperate such beautiful, such unadulterate Irish. I will not continue the story: Thaddeus Ballynamuck, though an admirable artist, fell a victim to the exuberance of his feelings; as a swindler he was professionally killed by Angelo, the late Marchesa di Lungabarba's greyhound.

I have narrated this little history that it may serve as an illustration of the perils besetting an honest, simple, guileless Englishman who might wish to swindle as an exotic. There is, it must be allowed, unnecessary peril in the experiment; besides I question if it be not unpatriotic. Why defraud our mother country of the advantage of our reputation? Why, with ungrateful, with unfilial hand add a leaf to the laurel of Germany—of France—of Italy—of Russia? No; for a true born Briton to swindle as a noble from the Hartz mountains—as a count from Paris—a Roman count—or a prince from St. Petersburg—is poor, shuffling, shabby, or, if I may use a term which I am proud to find of late very current among politicians and political writers (for the classes are more distinct than people are prone to imagine)—it is *Un-English*.

America, however, has her claims upon us. The swindler may, and with profit, prove his recollection of the ties that once bound Columbia to Britain—may gratefully acknowledge a sense of the relationship between the mother and the daughter country, by swindling as a gentleman with enormous possessions in New York, or, what is still better, in Virginia. Here the many-sided philosopher cannot fail to recognise a new advantage in a community of language. The *soi-disant* (hem! French again!), the *soi-disant* American swindler may avenge the injuries of a greyhound on the

person of a cellarman, yet run no risk of discovery. He may still run up and down the gamut of execration and not betray himself. Think of this, youthful swindler. Besides, there is another great temptation to offer this passing honour to America. Her unsettled currency affords the swindler a hundred plausible excuses if—for such improprieties do occur at the London Hotel, Grillon's, the Clarendon, all the very best of houses—if rudely pressed to show those credentials of gentility which even the rudest and the most illiterate never fail to acknowledge. Thus the swindler may for a time throw himself upon the banks : and this the more safely if he have displayed a handful of letters of introduction (a few to the royal household), all easily manufactured, and all, for the time, as good as letters of credit. There is another very practicable deceit. He may, on the night of his arrival in London, have his pocket picked of certain Government securities, and, having made the keeper of the hotel the depository of his secret, straightway advertise the loss in all the papers. This, I confess, is a ticklish experiment, demanding the finest self-possession, the greatest delicacy to carry it into successful operation ; and if the youthful swindler have any doubts of himself, I charge him by his hopes of future profit and reputation not to think of hazarding it. Should he, however, succeed, and the landlord advance liberally, he may condescend to express his best wishes for the prosperity of his host, and more, may invite himself to dine with him. Great caution, however, is to be used before there be any advance to such familiarity ; and yet I once knew a gentleman from Natchez who obtained unlimited credit from his host—the pot-house keeper was musical—by insisting upon it that he made Dibdin's "Lovely Nan" by the very force of expression remarkably like Rossini. So far, all was well ; but, forgetful of what

was due to himself as a swindler,—in the genial atmosphere of a domestic hearth letting himself down to the level of his host—the foolish fellow suffered himself to play at cribbage with his landlord; a man who had spent at least half of his long and useful life, pegging. Game after game the landlord's doubts increased; and at length he rose from the table with a blank in his face, and all the swindler's bill in his heart. "I'm done—I know I'm done!" cried the host with a groan. "I must be done, for no true gentleman could ever beat me at cribbage." At least one month's board and lodging, besides the greatest of all advantages, the first-rate reference to shopkeepers, did my friend from Natchez lose by his skill at cribbage. It is true when hard pressed he talked a great deal about the last failure of the cotton crop—an excellent theme, by the way—but in this case he talked to the winds, or, what was much worse, to a man obstinate upon his bill. My friend had to make an ignominious retreat, leaving behind him all his goods generously subscribed for him by the ingenuous West-end shopkeepers.

Notwithstanding this, the swindler may for a time take America for his country. The trick is by no means overdone. If, however, the swindler make the election—if he resolve upon becoming a gentleman of enormous fortune from the United States—he had better choose the South, and, above all things, he must not forget the cotton crop. As it once happened at New Orleans, much execution may, even in London, be done upon the enemy from behind cotton bags. As for his rank, the swindler should not venture beyond that of colonel—yes, a colonel and a great grower of cotton.

We next come to a most important subject—the dress of the swindler. The present age judges of the condition of

men as we judge of the condition of cats—by the sleekness, the gloss of their coats. Hence, in even what is called a respectable walk of life, with men of shallow pockets and deep principles, it is of the first importance to their success that, if they would obtain three hundred per annum, they must at least look as if they were in receipt of seven. Very many stoical privations are endured for this great purpose. How many a fine hungry fellow carries his dinner upon his back—his breakfast in his beaver—his supper in his boots! The Hottentot is not the only human animal that clothes itself with the cost of bowels. The swindler, however, is not—fate forbid that it should be so!—called upon to make the same sacrifice required every day in London of the poor, friendless student—of the miserable, unknown artist—the juvenile surgeon, panting for a practice—the barrister, without a fee—the curate, with lips hungering for even locusts and wild honey—the thousands of God's most helpless creatures, gentlemen, born with a silver spoon, but left by fortune at their maturity without any employment for knife and fork—no, no, it is the purpose, the triumph of swindling to put its professors in purple and fine linen, and to make “their eyes red with wine and their teeth white with milk.” They have to dress well, not to keep up the barren name of gentleman, but to flourish as swindlers. Poor Dactyl, the poet—astonishing truth!—is too proud to take credit for a hat—too poor to buy one—and too high-spirited to nod to his old college friends in a rusty beaver. Will the reader listen to a fact? What does Dactyl? Why, he makes a compromise with his magnanimity—he over-persuades himself that his beaver is as yet tolerably jetty, since all the summer he has once a day sponged it with a damp sponge, and kept religiously upon the shady side of the pavement. I mention this wretched shift of a pusillanimous

spirit to show to the young swindler what might be his fate if, with a pertinacity only found in simpletons of the very first class, he would resolve to live the gentleman upon the revenue of the chameleon ; and, with not a sixpence in his pocket, would be sufficiently mad to rave about honour in his bosom. What is the reward of such obstinacy—what the goal of men so honourably idle—so perversely pure? What the end? Go,—ask it of the Thames! Put the question to the Serpentine—the New River—the canals! Mutter the query as you pause at the gunsmith's—as you linger at the chemist's! Ask, as you see whisk by you the chariot of the coroner!

I had not touched upon this mean-spirited class of bipeds—of the species, many of whom die off in honourable poverty, and many in a dishonourable horse-pond—did not swindling save a third portion of the body from a life of starvation and an end of vulgar misery. The good, indulgent parents who, in submission, as they conceive, to the high civilisation of the day, will rather let their sons be nothing if they cannot put them in a fair way to become archbishops, chancellors, and commanders-in-chief, owe much to swindling, for—urbane goddess!—how often does she take the pet of the fireside—the darling of the chimney corner—the pretty prodigal, when plucked of every feather by the jackdaws¹ of the town, and make of him again a bird of finest plumage. Yes, thousands and thousands of young gentlemen, shamefully deserted by their parents when they had not a farthing more to leave them, and—wanting a calling—with nothing to do, have been received with open arms by the tenderest of foster-mothers ; and not only once more set upon their legs, but,

¹ I persuade myself that Captain Whitefeather here meant nothing personal.—[JOHN JACKDAW, Ed.]

perhaps, for the first time in their lives, put into their own cabriolets! Little thinks the plodding tradesman, determined upon making Tom a gentleman, that his dear boy may owe all the external appearances of that character to nought but swindling. But I have wandered.

The swindler must dress well—very well; nay, he must be rather over-dressed than under-dressed. If his means be scanty, he must on the outset, if I may use the phrase of a celebrated bill discounter, late of the New Cut—he must “spend his money superficially”; that is, as the before-named fiscal authority condescended to explain, he must expend a little in such a way that the outlay may appear very considerable. He must, however, continually bear this in mind, that in this our beloved country—in England—the empress of nations—the queen of reason—the genius of toleration—and the benefactress of the oppressed—nearly everything depends upon a man’s coat. Great and rich is he indeed who can afford to confront the midday sun in threadbare cloth. It matters not what may be your genius—what your worth; you must make the success of that genius apparent—you must publish the reward of that worth; you must assure men’s eyes that you are a fine gentleman, or you will, with all your glorious aspiration, be passed, confounded with the mob. The triumphs of mind are to the trading million too subtle, too abstract, to be easily grasped; but the quality of a man’s coat—the gorgeousness of his vest—the chain of finest carat—the ring of brightest sparkle—all of these are so many indisputable evidences of worldly success, and are, therefore, to be continually carried about by a man as universal vouchers for his character. John Bull has certainly the largest eyes of any of the nations. Hence, if it be imperative upon men with even a known calling to exhibit an outward sign of the

prosperity of that craft, how much more is it incumbent on us—the minions of Mercury, with nothing but the vivacity of our wits “to feed and clothe” us—to put a splendid outside upon swindling, and since the world ducks to appearance, to assure ourselves of its very, very lowest stooping! I have never yet known an instance of a successful swindler in a shabby coat. Who, indeed, would trust a man with a hole in his hat? Read the Police Reports—those “short and simple annals”—how, nineteen times out of twenty, do they commence? Why, thus—“Algernon Mountedgecomb, a young man dressed in the highest style of fashion,” etc., etc. Such is always the strain; for can the reader point out any case with any verbal similarity to the following:—“Yesterday, John Snooks, a wretchedly attired fellow, was brought up charged with obtaining under false pretences a diamond ring, a gold repeater, and a suit of pearls from the house of——?” Has ever such a case been chronicled? Certainly not: hence, the tailor is indispensable to the swindler, who is on no account to spare him. The swindler may, in the weakness of his nature, have some qualms towards any one except a tailor; but the swindler who deals mercifully with a tailor had better seek another profession—such chicken-heartedness is not for our art. The benevolence is so much goodness lost—wasted—flung to the winds; for you are to bear with you this recollection: it is an axiom in his trade, that the tailor never loses. “Them as does pay”—such was the confession of an eminent coatmaker after his second bottle of Burgundy drank at Button Park, his country seat—“them as does pay,” said the good man, “pays for them as doesn’t.” Can there be a finer provision for the protection of trade, and the satisfaction of the non-paying? Hence, if possible, flay your tailor. Should he discount—for there are such philanthropists—let him have a few bills by all means. In his

vast profits what are two or three thousands more or less in a twelvemonth's balance? *If*, however, he will not discount the paper of your friends—"accommodate" is a good word—he cannot refuse your own bill. Great is the satisfaction of a bill! What serenity comes upon a man's soul when he hath writ "accepted"! What a load he feels lifted from his lightened heart! How airily, how joyously he looks around him, elevated with a sense of duty done to his neighbour and to himself! Sweet, most sweet, the satisfaction! Such I am sure was the feeling of my late lamented friend, Captain Judas Gammon; for that excellent fellow never accepted a bill that he did not clasp his hands and, raising his eyes with a devout look of thanksgiving, exclaim, "There now—thank heaven!—that's paid!"

There is, however, one objection to a bill—it puts another pair of wings to the back of Time. Hence, get a long day. He was a philosopher and knew human nature, and more than all, those profound workings of the human heart set going by the machinery of bills,—he *was* a sage who, at the Old Bailey bar,—what men of wit and genius have made that nook all classic ground!—having received sentence of seven years' retirement from the bustling world, thus, with smiling face, addressed the judge:—"I beg your pardon, my lord, but have you a stamp about you? if so, permit me to accept a bill at seven years, for then they'll pass like one."

Next for equipage. A swindler, like a physician, can scarcely hope to prosper on foot. He must *ride* to fame and fortune: hence a cab is of the first consequence to him. This, however, is too obvious to call for further disquisition. The effect of a magnificent cab—a grey blood—and a diminutive fancy tiger—upon the sensibilities of the shopkeeping world are every day made manifest by the Police

Reports. Jonathan Wild, Richard Turpin, and other worthies laboured on horseback—civilisation adds to their less blood-thirsty descendants the comforts and the graces of a cab.

And now, come we to the moral bearing of the swindler. Destiny has marked him to play a very various character. He is, I will not attempt to disguise it, beset by difficulties. There are men, assuredly, born with a genius for the profession ; who, as it would seem, instinctively adapt themselves to all its peculiarities ; men who would have been lost, sacrificed, utterly unknown in any other calling. I do not address myself to them—this luminous work is not written for their instruction ; but to the thousands of the rising generation, induced, tempted, by the spirit of the times—a spirit of the most tyrannic gentility—to live without means ; to eat the fat of the land without once greasing their delicate fingers in search of it. Let these, however, not conclude that our path lies over flowers : by no means ; there are very many rubs to be endured on the way—rubs calling for at once the greatest self-possession and the most admired meekness. Indeed, I should not discharge a great public duty did I not state it as my conviction that very far less powers of mind, and ingenuity of a much lower scale, are found sufficient to make a fortune in any of the low mechanic arts of life than are required by even the humblest swindler. However, the ardour of youth is not to be withstood ; hence our best choice is to instruct and fortify it.

And now, neophyte swindler, let me put a few questions to you. And ere you answer, submit to a most rigorous self-examination—search every hole and corner of your heart ; and then hold up your head and reply unblushingly.

Can you bear what is called public contempt ? Are you clothed with a moral armour, more impenetrable than the

scales of the dragon—from which the glances of reproach, the scoffs, the sneers, the hard abuse of vulgar minds—the mere pity of those prigs who call themselves philanthropists—shall fall aside unfelt and unremembered?

Can you school yourself to look in all human faces—for this trial *will* come—and find them blank?

Have you sufficient fortitude to witness unrepiningly the good fortune of some early companion—a dullard, yet plodding, and what the world calls honest—surrounded with all the luxuries of life, the fruits of lowly huckstering, when, possibly, you yourself are yearning for a tester?

Can you bear with the nerves of a martyr the visitation of a horse-whip—for I will not shirk any of the probabilities that wait upon the profession—or the vindictive and un-Christianlike application of a pointed boot to the *os sacrum*?¹

Can you, at proper time and season, bear your nose pulled? I am aware that this is perhaps the most difficult, the most trying ordeal for the weakness of human nature to withstand; and therefore, I repeat the question—Can you bear your nose pulled?

Can you, with no quains at your throat, behold in rags or in a gaol the simple gull who has trusted you, or who—more exquisitely simple still—has become your surety?

Can you, when old age approaches, and your place in the world is filled up by more active, more youthful professors—can you, with your hand upon your heart, retire like a

¹ “It is very strange,” remarks Captain Whitefeather in one of his unpublished essays, “On Personal Satisfaction,” “how very few men know what is due to themselves and to the second party, in inflicting what they call personal chastisement. I have,” continues the Captain, with that delightful ingenuousness which made him the soul of his circle, “I have been kicked, horse-whipped, cudgelled, tossed in a blanket, pumped upon and flung into a horse-pond, yet I never, but in one instance, met with a man who thrashed me *like a gentleman*”—[JOHN JACKDAW, Ed.]

philosopher to a corner, and with not an eye to look comfort to you, not a lip to breathe hope to you, not a hand to grasp your hand—can you breathe your last breath with the conviction that you have done no injury to the dead, will leave no wounds in the living—and that having passed a life in heroic defiance of human prejudices, you meet death with the magnanimous indifference of a roasted Indian?

Consider, my dear pupil, whether you are so happily organised that you can support these trials—too often attendant on our chivalrous profession—and answer.

The pupil laughs at the impossibility of such evils, and, chuckling at the fun, says—I can.

And Swindling takes him to her arms and makes him all her own!

CHAPTER V.

A Brief Summary of the Advantages of Swindling.

I HAVE, I hope, made it sufficiently plain to the plainest understanding that the faculty, the desire to swindle, is born with us, and that it is entirely owing to the force of circumstance whether we swindle or not; and that, however nice, and moral, and exemplary, we may be in our individual capacity, swindle we must and do, when we congregate together, even with what are termed and considered the very best intentions. This being granted, let every man with all possible speed enroll himself as one of a body corporate. He may be a most rigid member of a Temperance Society, considering the parish pump the only source of all human enjoyment; and yet, as one of a body, he may drive a very pretty trade

in opium. He may, to his great self-exaltation, hold a plate in aid of the funds for the dissemination of the true faith; and yet the diamond on his finger may have been purchased with an odd balance of the profits which, as one of a company, he receives from a Hindoo idol. What the superficial world denominates and brands as swindling in the individual it applauds as spirited speculation, wisdom, foresight, a fine knowledge of business in a number. Hence, if a man would swindle safely, steadily, and above all, respectably, let him become one of a public company, and his dearest wish is straight fulfilled. What a profound liar he may be on the Stock Exchange, and yet what an oracle of truth at his own fireside! How he is permitted to rob his neighbour by means of false intelligence, and what a roaring he is justified in setting up should some famishing, unprincipled scoundrel lessen by one the numerous tenants of the good man's hen-roost! Reader, if you are not already enrolled, become one of a body. Though you may be only able to edge yourself into a vestry, it shall be something. And what a relief it is for the individual man, compelled to walk half his time through the world in tight moral lacing, to be allowed to sit at his ease at the Board! If morality sigh for leisure, where can it be enjoyed if not in a company! Once in a company, how many Catos become Antonys!

To the rising generation the advantages of swindling are incalculable. The term swindling is, at present, an ugly one; but with the advancement of the world it will be considered as another and a better system of ethics. To obtain all things needful for the refined man, by the exercise of the moral faculties, is, doubtless, the greatest triumph of human intellect, and this is inevitably achieved by the successful practice of swindling.

There is another advantage—another consolation—that I have purposely left for consideration in this place.

When the plodding, sober, thrifty man quits this noisy world—made noisy by the incessant rattling of pounds, shillings, and pence—it is ten to one that he makes what is generally called an irreparable gap in a large circle of the most affectionate of friends. He leaves a widow broken-hearted—daughters inconsolable—sons in the deepest affliction—nieces and nephews very much concerned—and innumerable acquaintances all ready, with very little further excitement, to burst into tears. Now here is a woe inflicted upon fifty people by the decease of one man—yes, here are fifty people made more or less miserable by a very natural event, the decease of a worthy soul, who would not willingly inflict a moment's pain upon any living thing.

How different the death of the swindler! He makes no irreparable gap in society—not he! he agonises neither man, nor woman, nor child; not a tear is dropped at his grave—not a sigh rises at the earth rattling on his coffin! Must not the conviction of this be the sweetest consolation to the dying swindler? Think of his end, and——

[It may be thought that the work ends abruptly. It does so: the author had not leisure to finish it. The following letter will, perhaps, throw some light upon the matter. It was addressed by the Captain to an intimate friend:—

“H.M. Transport, *Barrington*.

“DEAR TOM,—We are off for blue water. Some papers of mine are in a deal box in the two-pair back of the Bag-o-Nails. If you love me, see I'm in print. I learn from a fellow-shipmate—whose only misfortune is that his handwriting was very similar to another gentleman's

—that the papers will make a very pretty book, there being a great call nowadays for the greatest information in the smallest compass. You can pay in for me what you get through the Home Office. Be wide awake, and believe me, under all convictions,

“Yours truly,

“BARABBAS WHITEFEATHER.

“P.S.—You know I never liked shaving; the chin’s bad enough—but when it comes to the head, it’s ‘regular cruelty to animals.’”

The above is (“errors excepted”) a true copy of the Captain’s letter. He died in—I regret to say I cannot give the exact latitude: suffice it to say he died; but left behind him what, I trust, will prove an imperishable monument of his social worth and his exalted genius.—
JOHN JACKDAW, Ed.]

THE EDITOR’S CHAPTER TO THE READER.

THE reader has, probably, marked a variety of style in the foregoing pages. The Editor feels it to be due as much to the lamented Captain Whitefeather as to himself to state that he, John Jackdaw, is solely responsible for the manner in which this work is presented to all the eyes of the British public.

Nature had been very prodigal to the Captain; but whether from the extreme vivacity of his genius, or whether from a more hidden cause, it is vain to search, the Captain, with all his debts, owed nothing to art. Even his orthography was of the happiest originality.

The Editor, therefore, felt the peculiar delicacy of his task. Had he printed the MS. as it came, with the bloom upon it, from the Captain’s hand, it was to be feared that in this age of light reading—which reading, like pills, is made

to be bolted, not, like bread, to be carefully chewed—not one out of a hundred would have had the necessary patience to go through with it. To suppress the work for any defect of style would have been to sacrifice, as the Editor considered, a great national good. After much deliberation there appeared to him a golden mean. It struck the Editor that he might, in very many instances, give the style of Whitefeather, whilst in very many more he might heighten, and adorn, and vary it from his own poor resources. Still, be it understood, all the *facts* are Whitefeather's; the Editor only lays claim to certain tropes, and metaphors, and inimitable felicities of expression, to which, probably, it might be considered indelicate were he more emphatically to allude. Indeed, he has only touched upon the theme in the way of business; as there may be, even at this moment, many noble and distinguished authors who, “wanting the accomplishment” of grammar, are yet desirous of appearing in print. (To these, in parenthesis, the author addresses himself; assuring the tadpole *literati* that he finishes tales, histories, biographies, poems, etc., with all despatch, and with the most inviolable secrecy. His address is in a former page, and Breakneck Steps is too well known to all who would mount Parnassus.)

To the publishers of the remains of Captain Whitefeather the Editor has to express his warmest gratitude. The Editor blushes for the intelligence of the trade, when he states that this national work, like the hitherto inimitable *Robinson Crusoe*, was offered in the humblest manner to twenty houses, and, sometimes coldly, sometimes sulkily, sometimes indignantly refused.

One was tickled by the title, but looked blank when he understood that there was no murderer—no highwayman in it. He declared that the only way to keep a reader awake

was to commit at least one murder in every page ; that the gallows was now the only bay tree, and that even the youthful generation sucked intelligence and morals from tales of the gibbet, with the same eagerness and the same advantage that they sucked liquorice root ! “Season it, sir—season it,” said one bland gentleman, “with a handful of murders—a terrific storm on the New River—and a miraculous escape from Marylebone watchhouse, and there may be some hopes of it.” A second asked me to change the title into “The Handbook of the Money Markets,” adding, to my astonishment, that he had no doubt the staple of the matter would serve equally well. A third—but why should I enumerate the rebuffs endured ? No ; let me rather, in the name of an obliged generation, register a gratitude to the enlightened spirit under whose auspices the book appears—a work destined, as the Editor with all diffidence declares, to work a good as incalculable as, perhaps, unknown !

CAT-AND-FIDDLE MORALITIES.

THE TALE OF A TIGER.

FOR fifteen years had the large wooden arm-chair of the Cat-and-Fiddle been consecrated to the use of Captain Bam. He would sit in it as it were a throne; and the customary guests of the hostelry paid him affectionate loyalty. He had won all hearts by his odd, kind ways; he had become the familiar oracle of all by his strange, yet wise sayings. He had, too, the rare and happy knack of so mixing his wisdom with his drollery, that when men laughed and swallowed his jest, they also, like children cheated with sweetened physic, swallowed something that in proper season would do them hearty good. And then there was a mystery about Captain Bam; and, at times, mystery is a sort of sauce to human character. It will now and then give a strange relish to what without it would be insipid commonplace. Not that it was so with Captain Bam. Certainly not: but the mystery was this. Fifteen years before—on a sharp, wintry afternoon—he crossed the threshold of the Cat-and-Fiddle. He carried a small leathern pack, and appeared otherwise appointed for a long pilgrimage. It was, we say, sharp, blighting weather, and Captain Bam called hastily for a mug of ale. “A mug of ale, and directly,” said Captain Bam, “for I can’t stop a minute.” The ale was brought, and the Captain hastily took a long draught thereof. He then drew his breath, and a smile as

from the very roots of his heart broke over his face, and his eye strangely glimmered and twinkled upon the landlord. "*Eureka!*" said Captain Bam, and the host looked. "*Eureka!*" again exclaimed the Captain. "Take my pack," he said, in a voice trembling with the fulness of satisfaction, "take my pack—I will rest here."

And Captain Bam—his pack removed—sank in the large arm-chair. It seemed that his travels were ended; that, in a happy moment, he had accomplished the purpose of his life; that all his future existence would be an appointed state of rest. There was a little wooden nook—a sort of summer-house, at the end of a long garden—which, after few words, he hired of the host; whence every night he came to bestow his talk upon the guests of the Cat-and-Fiddle. "And how he would talk! Ha! better than a printed book." Such was the oft avowed opinion of his gladdened hearers. And now the Captain is dead. His body lies in the churchyard of the market town, but two miles distant from the Cat-and-Fiddle. He had himself written his epitaph. It is a model of brief simplicity—enough to bring a blush into the cheek of many a stone-faced cherub. The epitaph has only one word: it is this: "BAM."

The Captain died, but not his stories. No; there sat every night in the fireside corner of the Cat-and-Fiddle an ardent, passionate lover of the mind of Bam. He was a silent Pylades—a mute Pythias. He would sit and store himself with the syllables of Bam; then, like the bee, would he fly rejoicing home, and ere he slept hive the wisdom in enduring ink. That wisdom is now before us. The little vellum-bound book, its pages finely written as with the point of a needle, lies upon our desk. Upon the forehead of its title-page there are these words, "CAT-AND-

FIDDLE MORALITIES ;” touchingly recollectful of the genial haunt where their fine wisdom was audible.

There are—no, we will not tell the number of stories enshrined in this little book. But from time to time we will lay one before the reader, in what we believe to be the very words of Bam.

Yes : we will begin with the first. Here it is—the title beautifully engrossed, from which we guess the legal yearnings of the chronicler—here it is.

THE TALE OF A TIGER.

Perhaps, my friends, you have never heard of a place called Singapore. Well, it’s no matter if you haven’t. It’s a long, long way east, where all sorts of shipping trade, and where all sorts of people live—Chinamen, Malays, Javanese, Bengalees, English, Dutch, and what not. Well, there was at Singapore a certain Dutch family in the pepper trade. They were named Vandervermin. They were all rich, cautious, heavy people ; all save Jacob Vandervermin, who when a mere youth was left a poor orphan ; left, as it might have seemed, on purpose to exercise the loving benevolence of prosperous uncles and aunts, and flourishing cousins. Alas ! the whole body of the Vandervermins considered the poverty of Jacob as a blight—a family reproach ; a nuisance that every one sought to put off upon the other. Jacob was the little toe of clay that disgraced the Vandervermin body of brass. And what made him worse, he was, for one with Dutch blood in his veins, a sprightly, frolicsome fellow. He was a beggar, and yet, with a stony hardness of heart—as Peter Vandervermin, the head of the family, declared—he would laugh and make offensive jokes upon his wretchedness. There are men who cannot understand

a joke, simply because it is a thing that carries no worth with it in a ledger. Now Peter Vandervermin received a joke—especially the joke of a poor man—as an offence to his judgment and a sidelong sneer at his pocket. His wife, Drusilla Vandervermin, was of the same belief; and in this goodly creed man and wife had reared a numerous family. Jacob Vandervermin was the only outcast of the name who had ever disgraced it by a jest. It was plain he would come to no good; plain that he would die the death of a sinner. When one day his body was found mortally mangled by a tiger, not one of the Vandervermins was shocked or surprised. No: they had always said that something dreadful would happen to him, and it had come about. Jacob was buried—handsomely buried. Not one of the Vandervermins would have given him when alive the value of a coffin nail; but, being dead, the case was altered. The pride of the family was concerned in the funeral; hence, they respected themselves in their treatment of the deceased. Doubtless the ghost of a despised, ill-used relation is propitiated by a costly burial; and thus many a cousin or half-brother who has glided through life in a cobweb coat has superfine cloth upon his coffin.

I had this history of Jacob Vandervermin from a Chinaman. He repeated it to me with the eloquence and fervour of a believer. The Chinamen—at least the sort that live at Singapore—believe that when the tiger kills its first man, his ghost becomes its very slave; bound, ordered by fate to be a sort of jackal to the tiger; compelled by destiny to find the beast its dinners, even among his kith and kin. Hence, a tiger having carried off one of a family, not one of the survivors is from that moment safe. My Chinaman—he passed for a very learned fellow among his tribe—had the most intimate knowledge of the Vandervermin tragedy,

which, after his own lofty fashion—painting his story as though he was painting his native porcelain—he related to me. I shall give it you in plain, cold English; for, my good friends all, be it known to you, I scorn the flourish of a traveller.

At the age of eighteen Jacob Vandervermin—having been knocked from uncle to uncle, the poor, passive family shuttlecock—fell at length into the counting-house of his richest, and oldest uncle, Peter. For two years did Jacob eat the bread of dependence; for with that bitter word was his bread always buttered—when he awakened the inextinguishable ire of his rich and orderly relative. Jacob had been guilty of a gross wickedness; in fact, of a crime, in the eyes of Peter Vandervermin, of the deepest dye. He had, in a moment of culpable neglect, let fall a large, unsightly blot of ink upon his uncle's ledger. To the mind of Peter Vandervermin, his graceless nephew had thrown an indelible stain upon the white reputation of the family; at least Peter so avenged the fault, for without a word he seized a ruler that lay upon the desk, and with it smote the skull of the blotting offender. Jacob uttered no syllable; but instantly closing the ledger, and raising it with both his hands, he brought down the book of figures with such precise vehemence upon the head of his uncle, that the principal of the house of Vandervermin & Co. lay stunned and prostrate on the floor of his own temple—that is, of his own counting-house.

Now Jacob was not a man to give unnecessary trouble. He knew that if he remained it would only cause his uncle the pain and the perplexity of thrusting him from the house, and therefore, with scarcely a penny in his purse, did Jacob don his hat and cross his uncle's threshold.

Vain was it for him to beg the aid of any of the name of

Vandervermin. What, he—a poor creature, too, a pauper, a beggar, a—no, there was no worse word for him—he smite so good, so tender an uncle ! No, he might starve, perish ; it would be to share his wickedness to relieve him. It was a secret comfort to the Vandervermins that Jacob, in a momentary forgetfulness, had knocked down his uncle. That sacrilegious blow had for ever and for ever snapped the thousand fine ties that—despite of his previous errors—still held him to the family heart. Now he might perish ; and the sooner the better. The only hope was that he would be drowned, or decently starved to death ; that, for the sake of the family, he would not come to be hanged, however richly he deserved it.

For some weeks Jacob continued to live without money. Nothing, perhaps, so eminently shows the superiority, the crowning greatness of the human animal—a fact so well attested in many cases—as the power of man to subsist for a time without cash. He is a self-wonder while he does it ; nevertheless, the miracle is performed. Tear a plant up by the roots—fling it aside—and it perishes. Shut a cat up in an empty, mouseless garret, and one by one her nine lives will go out. But take money from man—money, which is the root of evil, a root upon which man best flourishes, thereby proving the wickedness of his nature—and still, still he lives. Perhaps, somehow, the carnivorous, omnivorous animal becomes an air-plant, and so feeds upon the atmosphere about him. I have met with many air-plants of the sort. There is not a city, a town, without them. Such men get over days, and weeks, and months, and wonder how they have so successfully travelled thus far to the grave. They must rub their hands, that they have cheated what seemed to them a vital principle of nature.

And in this way Jacob Vandervermin lived. Every day

seemed to him a difficult stepping-stone to get over, and yet the night saw him on the other side of it. But it is hard, miserable work, this keeping check against time by meals in the bowels: this incessant looking for butcher and baker as the allies against death, and wondering and trembling from day to day, lest they should not come to the rescue. My friends, this is hard, debasing work—I have known it.

One day, with thoughts heavy as lead upon his brain, did Jacob Vandervermin wander forth. He wandered and wandered, until, weary and spent, he sank upon the stump of a tree in a desolate place. “How—how,” cried Jacob, “shall I live another day!”

What a mole-eyed thing is man! How he crucifies himself with vain thoughts—how he stands upon tiptoe, straining his cyestrings, trying to look into the future, when at that moment the play is over—the show is done.

Jacob had scarcely uttered —“How shall I live another day!” when a tiger, a royal tiger—wherefore a cruel, treacherous, bloodthirsty beast should be called royal, I know not—when a royal tiger fell like a thunderbolt upon him.

As a very large tom-cat snaps in its mouth a very small mouse, and looking statelily around seems to say—the mouse kicking all the while—“Pooh, pooh; why this is nothing!” so did the royal tiger look and speak, with Jacob Vandervermin writhing and screaming in its jaws. Well, tigers make short work of men. Almost as short as man himself sometimes makes of his fellow biped. Jacob Vandervermin—it was his luck to meet with a benevolent tiger; he was not played with before he was finally crunched—Jacob Vandervermin was soon dead.

And now, my friends, prepare for a wonder! Long before the tiger had picked the bones of Jacob,—Jacob’s ghost

stood, like a waiting footman, meekly behind the dining animal. There was Jacob in his wide, parasol-like hat of straw—his white jacket and trousers, in all things the same as when he lived, save that he was so transparent the eye could see through him: and then his look was so serene and passionless! It was odd to see how meekly the ghost looked on the while the tiger gnawed and crunched, and then with its rasping tongue cleaned the bones of the ghost's late body. It was plain that the ghost cared no more for what he once thought the most valuable thing under heaven, than if it were an old threadbare coat, put aside for a glorious garment. Thus, after a few minutes, the ghost seated itself upon the stump of the tree—where, a short time before, it had sat in the flesh—and twiddling its thumbs, looked composedly about it. And when the tiger had finished Jacob—for the poor animal had not for a week before tasted so much as a field mouse—it stalked away to its den, the ghost of Jacob following it.

Gorged to the whiskers, almost for two whole days did the tiger sleep. And then rising and stretching itself—like a Mogul after a debauch—the tiger said, "Jacob!"

"What wills my lord?" answered Jacob's ghost.

"Jacob, I must sup: something nice, now—something delicate. I don't like to say it to your face, Jacob, but you haven't quite agreed with me. I could fancy something mild and tender to-night."

For a moment the ghost was thoughtful; then observed, "What says my lord to a nice sugar-cane salad?"

The tiger leered somewhat pityingly at the ghost; then saying "Look here!" opened its jaws. Even the ghost of Jacob shivered—like moonlight upon water—at the dreadful array of teeth. "Think you," said the tiger, "such teeth were made for salads?"

"Tigers, I have heard, were not always flesh-eaters," said the ghost, a little boldly.

"Why, there is a story among tigers," answered the ingenuous brute, "that at one time—but it's a long time ago—we used to crop clover and trefoil and wild thyme, for all the world like foolish little lambs. And then suddenly—but how it came about I never heard—we took to eating the kids and lambkins that before we played with. How the change began, and who took to killing first, I know not: I have only heard it wasn't tigers; and now, I only know that I must sup: that this very night I must have another Vandervermin. Have you any babies in the house?"

"None: I assure you, my lord, not one," answered the ghost.

"That's a pity," said the tiger, "for I feel it, my stomach needs something tender and succulent. However, lead on: air and exercise may tone my vitals a little. Why do you tarry, sirrah?"—and the tiger growled like a stage tyrant—"you know your destiny; lead on."

The ghost seemed to feel the truthful force of the rebuke, and immediately led the way. As they walked on, the ghost espied a remarkably fine ox, strayed from a neighbouring farm. "See, my lord, see!" cried the shadow.

"No, no," said the tiger, a little contemptuously. "I can't do that sort of thing now: having once tasted the goodness of man, I must go on with him. No, no; I thank my luck I now know what good living really is." And then the tiger paused, and twisting its tail gracefully about its legs, as sometimes an ingenuous maid will twist about a gown flounce, the brute observed—"What a lovely night! How the air freshens one's spirits! What a beautiful moon—and how the stars shine—and the air's whisper

among the tamarind trees, like unseen fairies making love! You are sure, Jacob, there is not a baby in the house?"

"Nothing like it, my lord," answered Jacob.

"What is the best you can promise me?" asked the tiger.

"To-night, I'm afraid nothing better than Drusilla, my aunt," said the ghost. The tiger growled dubiously; and then said, "Well, we can but look at her. You know the safest way,—so mind what you're about."

Cautiously, stealthily, goaded by fate, did the ghost of Jacob lead the tiger to the mansion of Peter Vandervermin. Leaping a low wall, they gained a garden, and proceeded along a winding walk, until they came to a pretty little summer pavilion, wherein sat aunt Drusilla, as was her wont, knitting, with a large Dutch pug at her feet.

"There's your supper," said Jacob, pointing to the withered old gentlewoman.

"Humph!" growled the tiger, and angrily twitched its tail—"humph! It's against my stomach; I can't do it."

"What think you," urged the ghost, "of the pug just for a snack?"

The tiger curled its whiskers with a look of disgust, and growling "dropsical," turned supperless away. And all the next night did the tiger fast. But sweet is the sauce of hunger; for on the third evening the tiger rose and stretched itself, and its eyes glared with brightening flame as it said—"Come along, Jacob: I don't know that the old woman will eat badly after all."

Jacob again conducted the destroyer to the house. Again showed Drusilla, unconscious of her fate, knitting, knitting. There was a slight growl—a spring—an old woman's scream—a yap, yap from the pug—and then the wall was leapt—and Peter Vandervermin was a widower.

I will not follow the tiger to its banquet. Suffice it to

say, the tiger ate and slept. However, very ill and feverish did the tiger awake in the morning. "Jacob," cried the tiger, "what's the matter with me? Phew! I can hardly move."

"Perhaps," said Jacob, "my lord has just a stitch in his side."

"No, no," said the tiger, "I feel 'em now; it's that abominable old woman's knitting needles."

"Every rose has its thorn, my lord," said the ghost, joking as a ghost may be supposed to joke. "You never find a woman without pins and needles."

"Jacob," cried the tiger, "either you come of a very bad family, or, after all, man-eating is by no means so wholesome—however pleasant it may be—as a hearty, simple meal off a buffalo, a deer, or anything of that sort."

"Then why, my lord," urged the ghost, "why not return to the humbler diet?"

"That's all very well, Jacob. Why don't men—with red noses and no insides—turn from arrack and new rum, and drink only at the diamond spring? I begin to feel myself no better than a drunkard: yes, I fear I'm a lost tiger. It's very nice—very delicious to eat a man at night—but it's like what I've heard of drink—what a headache it leaves in the morning! Ha!" cried the beast, "I'm afraid I'm making quite a man of myself. Look at my tongue, Jacob; it's as hard and as dry, you might grind an axe upon it. Oh, that dreadful old woman!"—and the tiger closed its heavy, bloodshot eyes, and tried to sleep.

Only three days past, and then the tiger leapt up, and licking itself all over—as though it was going out to an evening party, and wished to put the very best gloss upon its coat—the creature cried—"Come away, Jacob: I must have another Vandervermin."

"Oh, my lord," cried the ghost, "think what you'll suffer in the morning."

"*That* for the morning," cried the tiger, whisking its tail—"I tell you, Jacob, I intend to make a night of it. Slave, lead on."

And thus for three months, conducted by the fate-enforced ghost, did the tiger continue to sup off Vandervermins. Uncles and aunts, cousins male and female, in all eight, had the tiger devoured, when one night the brute carried off the ninth and last victim in the person of Justus Vandervermin, lawyer and usurer. The tiger—strange to say—devoured every bit of him; but it was the brute's last morsel; it never could digest him. Justus Vandervermin remained, like so much india-rubber, in the vitals of the tiger. Nothing could stir the lawyer.

"Jacob," cried the brute, feeling its last hour approach, "I shall die, and your ghost will be at rest. I forgive you—but why—why didn't you tell me that Justus was a lawyer?"

And with these words the tiger died, and the ghost of Jacob Vandervermin was instantly at peace.

"And if all this story isn't true, Captain,"—asked one of the Cat-and-Fiddle company,—“what do you get out of it?”

"Why, true or not, this much," answered Captain Bam; "never to neglect and ill-use a poor relation. For however low and helpless he may seem, the day may come when he shall have about him the strength of a tiger."

THE MOTH WITH THE GOLDEN WINGS.

HONEST Beber was a poor, merry-hearted denizen of the ancient city of Bassora ; and if goodness of heart were querulous as to its habitation of flesh, it would have had just grounds to complain of being lodged in so dilapidated a tenement as the body of Beber. To hear him speak—to see him laugh—was to hear the voice of the nightingale from the throat of an alligator ; and his smiles, as they lit up the lines of his shrivelled, bark-like countenance, were as the flashings of inestimable jewels through the ruins of a leathern casket. It had, moreover, pleased Allah to place the seal of darkness upon one of Beber's eyes ; and, probably fearing his temper under such a calamity, he had most wisely deprived his servant of his teeth : he had, furthermore, looped up a few inconsiderable lines in one of Beber's legs ; and that pride on this should not seek refuge in his servant's hands, Allah had graciously paralysed one of his believer's arms. Was pride expelled the body of Beber ? In such a ruined hovel of human clay did pride still find a peg whereon to hang her looking-glass ? Alas ! yes, Beber was proud. He would say, "There is happiness sufficient unto all men, praised be Allah ! If all have not a bale of cloth, there is also none but hath a thread. It is true if I am stricken upon the right cheek, I must turn me round to look for the hand ; and if he who buffets me can run with the gazelle, my legs keep me from the crime of slaying ; if two hands be needful for a thief, glory to Allah, who hath ordained his servant honest ; if honey-cakes make war upon

the teeth, I may indulge with safety. I am half blind, lame, toothless, and have but five serviceable fingers : but there is but one God, and he is great —I have not an ugly nose." Hereupon would Beber send forth a laugh—and such a laugh ! His joy would issue from his throat, as though it had to troll over so many pebbles, placed by some evil genius in his larynx. His laugh was composed of several sounds of a distinct, chinking sharpness—every note proceeding, as it were, from the movement of the before-named impediments. Pride in most cases arises from the possession, or the fancied possession, of some valuable quality : Beber was ingenious—he could only pamper his spirit upon the absence of ill. "We are never wholly destitute," he would say ; "Where Allah denies the waters of the fountain, he gives the sands of the desert."¹

Beber was in the employ of an old Persian in the city, who had for forty years been prying into the profound secrets of nature. Sefy, it was said, would for nights search for the heart of a fire-fly, and would for a week thumb over a mineral or a stone. He was old, ugly, and choleric. His face was the colour of sunburnt marble ; his greedy, deep-sunk eyes, overshadowed by their long wiry brows, were likened, in the language of his slaves, to two ravenous and crouching jackals watching from sepulchres. His beard was stained a dead black, which, shaken by the palsy in his head, gave him the appearance of a merciless and devouring goule. "The neighbours say," thus Beber would sometimes soliloquise, "that my master Sefy looks into matters deeper than those of insects and of stones ; that he has visits from the genii—upon which occasions his house shoots up and

¹ "Le douzième azoare du Koran prescrit de se laver le visage, la tête les bras et les jambes avant de prier. A défaut d'eau, de la poussière peut souffire."—BEAUVOISINS.

spreads out like a sunflower, and branches forth into kiosks and pavilions; all of which, however, melt away with the mists of the morning, leaving nothing but his old studying place." One morning Beber was so strongly possessed with the belief of his master's dispositions towards magic, that, instead of pursuing his task with his fellow-labourers of searching among the surrounding fields of Bassora for flies and pebbles, he entered a burial-place, and seating himself beneath a cypress tree, spent the whole of the day in intense but unprofitable cogitations. At length evening arrived, and Beber then became awakened to the folly of his conduct, and rallying the little philosophy he possessed, he determined to betake him, although empty-handed, and fearful of the bastinado, to his master. "Let me," said Beber, "but pass through the night with an uncracked skin, and master Sefy may give coffee to and wash the feet of Zatania himself, ere I again set going the machinery of my wit to the danger of my soles." With this resolution Beber arrived at the mansion of his master, who cast an evil eye upon the tardy servant, whilst anger seemed to aid the effect of palsy. "Slave! show me an excuse for this delay: come, produce your stores." Now it so happened that all Beber's fellows had been more than usually fortunate, and had presented their master with some of the rarest specimens of the insect and mineral kind; therefore the fault of Beber, when he informed his master of his want of success, appeared most iniquitous. "Slave!" exclaimed Sefy, and the foam of passion streaked his black beard, "go to my museum, and there await me."—"There is but one God, and he is great," softly murmured the unfortunate Beber; and he stepped with as much caution to the appointed place, as though he was treading the hair-breadth bridge of Al Sirat.

When Beber entered the museum, whether his precarious situation more awakened him to the peculiarity of the place is not recorded, but it is certain, on this occasion, he was more impressed with its appearance than heretofore. "There is but one God, and he is great," exclaimed Beber; "then why should men thus triumph over the lesser creatures?" This benevolent question was evidently excited by the peculiarity of the apartment, of which every atom was studded with living insects, impaled on wire. There were some thousands of wings beating convulsively: the whole room seemed instinct with life; Beber felt as if he were enclosed by four breathing walls. "He who for pastime runs pins through the bowels of beautiful and harmless flies, will feel but little for the flesh of man," thought Beber, and the sweat trickled to his knees, and his very bones were cold. "Wretch that I am!" continued he: "I have been the guilty partner of these crimes: I have torn these lovely creatures from the sun, the dews, and the flowers, to have their soft velvet bodies pierced with iron! Surely he who wantonly crushes a fly, would, had he the power, blacken the rainbow, or strike out the stars." Beber's heart was newly opened by the scene of suffering which surrounded him; and not knowing how long he might remain without being himself impaled in the middle of the room, as the grand central ornament of the museum, he resolved to do all the good that as yet was in his power. The eye of Beber was suddenly attracted by a large and beautiful Moth, fixed at the east side of the museum: it was beating its wings, and the acuteness of its agony tarnished at intervals their golden beauty; the perspiration, like fine diamond dust, started from it in every part: its horns were as polished steel, bearing two little beads like pearls; its body as crystal streaked with veins

of ruby ; its legs were as amber ; and upon each wing there was a bright emerald-coloured spot, which reflected the eye of the beholder. Beber had never in his long practice beheld any insect half so beautiful ; and, as it was so pre-eminently lovely, the slave, true to the weakness of human nature, thought that insect, before any other, should have its liberty—whereupon he carefully drew the tormenting pin from its body. The moth fell motionless to the ground, and Beber feared his mercy was come too late ; when, being about to stoop towards it, the moth suddenly sprang into the air, and flew gently and steadily around the head of the slave. As the insect moved, a soft entrancing melody was created by the undulations of its wings, which fixed Beber with upraised head, open mouth, and outstretched fingers, the scarcely-breathing figure of astonishment. By degrees the insect comes more closely to him ; now it just brushes his turban ; it strikes with its golden wings the closed lid of the one-eyed Beber, springs through the casement, and vanishes.

The slave utters a shout of astonishment—covers by turns each eye with his hand—the lately withered ball is again awakened to light—Beber is no longer a one-eyed man ! For some moments he chuckles with an inward delight ; he then sinks into a state of dreaminess, from which the appearance of Sefy, his vindictive master, alone arouses him. The old Persian starts on beholding in his museum a man in every respect like his servant Beber, save in the possession of two eyes. Without waiting for any explanation from the supposed intruder, Sefy orders his servants to take the slave to a distance, there to chastise him for his presumption, and then to search for the offending Beber. The menials, sharing in the surprise of their master, are puzzled with the person of their prisoner : he is like Beber—lame,

toothless, has but one good arm,—but then his two eyes! It is not for them to ponder on the question; they bear their charge into the fields, and dutifully chastise him.

And now behold the unfortunate Beber, left bleeding and exhausted at the outskirts of the city. The bastinado had done its work. “There is but one God, and Mahomet is his prophet,” sighed forth the unhappy man, as he gradually revived to a sense of his miserable condition.

“Softly, friend Beber! you have unaccountably gained an eye; although, I am afraid, against such profit you may put the loss of your other leg.” Here the wounds in his feet again began so to throb and smart that the poor fellow swooned under the agony. When he recovered, he saw, hovering over him, the very Moth with the Golden Wings to whom he had that day given liberty. The Moth gave every possible sign that it recognised its former deliverer; and, having fluttered round Beber for some time, it gradually sank to the soles of his feet, where Beber felt the insect fanning with its little wings his smarting wounds: a grateful coolness pervades the lacerated parts—the flesh closes—no scars remain—and Beber, rising from the earth, discovers that he is not only cured of his hurts, but of his lameness. “There is but one God!” he shouts, and throws himself round like a dervise. The Moth, although it carefully avoids the outstretched and eager hand of Beber, still flies around him, and seems by its movements as if it wished to guide the footsteps of its preserver. “Moth of Mahomet!—for you can be no other—I will follow you!” exclaimed Beber, and he marched forward.

The Moth flew to the city of Bassora; and, after guiding the astonished and delighted Beber through many turnings and bye-ways, at length brought him into a most beautiful garden. Here the Moth began to revel among the flowers,

which seemed sensible of its caresses, and in a manner returned them. Now the Moth would alight upon a rose-bud, which would instantly burst into a full-blown flower; and then again slightly collapse its leaves, as though wishing to confine the insect in its fragrant prison. After the Moth had thus dallied with many of the beauties of the place, it boldly flew into the hand of Beber, which it quickly left to visit a flower, and then as speedily returned. After the Moth had continued these movements for some time, Beber thought he would pluck a flower: scarcely does he pull a damask rose from its stalk, when the leaves curl together as though scorched by fire, their colour flashes with an added brilliancy, and that which, but a moment before, was a flower on the tree, becomes in the hand of Beber an inestimable ruby. Delight succeeds astonishment: Beber now plucks flowers of every hue, touched by the wings of the Moth; and in a few minutes he has jewels of every colour and description—from pearls transformed from lilies to amber from sunflowers. Whilst Beber was thinking where he should hide away his riches, he accidentally touched a spider's web depending from one of the trees, and it instantly burst forth into innumerable colours, and became, as it were, a rainbow of silk, which Beber instantly took, and deposited therein his newly-found riches.

Day was now fast approaching to a close; and Beber, on looking round for his good genius the Moth with the Golden Wings, found it had fled he knew not whither. Hereupon was Beber puzzled; for he knew not how to depart from a place into which he had been introduced he knew not how. Whilst Beber was engaged arranging the little wit sudden good fortune had left him, in order to deliver himself from his present perplexity, he perceived a long procession of attendants coming down the garden; and in an

instant Beber, surrendering his soul and body into the keeping of Allah, disposed himself into a very ball, and rolled under the friendly boughs of a neighbouring tree. Now, although Beber had degraded himself as much as possible from the upright bodily dignity of man, he had, nevertheless, like a wise politician, so disposed his eyes as not to be confounded by darkness in the general lump. He beheld a numerous body of attendants halt just opposite his hiding-place, where they commenced preparations for a splendid feast. They brought with them vessels of gold and silver, with the most delicate cates ; they spread the carpets, arranged the cushions ; the grand carver was at his post, and nothing was wanting but the master of the feast to commence the banquet. In a few minutes the great man himself appeared, and Beber shuddered as he beheld his savage aspect. Giaffar (for that was his name) was indeed a cruel and relentless man : the bones of many of his once beautiful Circassian slaves, if rumour might be trusted, had long whitened beneath the surge ; and even the bowels of the earth enclosed his victims. The feast began and ended in silence ; the coffee went its round, and the dancing-girls had performed their voluptuous measure. Giaffar questioned the slave respecting some trifling formality which had been unobserved in the economy of his chibouque, when the menial ventured a reply : Giaffar, starting from his cushion, threw his ataghan at the offender, who, however, by an adroit movement, escaped the blow, and the weapon went whizzing onward, and, falling at a distance, sheathed itself in the calf of the unhappy Beber's leg, who instantly sent forth a shriek which immediately drew the attendants about the sufferer. Beber is directly produced before the vengeful Giaffar, who in two words gives out the culprit's fate. The sound of the syllables,

“bow-string,” still tingled in Beber’s ears as he threw himself before Giaffar, imploring his most gracious consideration. The appeal was in vain, and Beber was being hurried away from the presence of Giaffar to the first convenient corner for execution, when in the struggle—for Beber, albeit supple and obliging, dared to struggle for his neck—the huge silken bag of jewels fell from the captive, and was speedily exposed to the rejoicing eyes of Giaffar. “How is this, slave?” said he, evidently pleased, as though his inward man had been tickled by a libation of the pearls dissolved; “how is this, and wherefore these inestimable riches?” Beber, feeling that his windpipe was as yet unobstructed by a cord, thought it behoved him, if possible, to work its everlasting liberty; and therefore rallying the little valour which had retreated he scarcely knew where, he determined upon acting the great man, and endeavouring to put death aside with a big word. “Glory to the Prophet!” commenced Beber; “his ways are wonderful; and no man knows but a narrow and a winding lane, with foul serpents in the path and thorns at the side, may lead to a field of melons. Surely, good sir, if merchants trading to Bassora are to have their necks fitted with bow-strings, the winds and waters will soon bring you nothing but grass-seed and sponge. When I quitted my good father, who, Allah rest him, is now beholding his beard in the black eyes of immortal houris; when he gave into my keeping these jewels wherewith I was to trade, and to make me lift up my head with any merchant in the Bazaar, little did I think I should have to plead for the holding of my patrimony, like a felon against the bastinado. But there is but one God,” added Beber, and he placed his hands across his breast. “Indeed! is this so?” replied Giaffar, who began to think he had gone too far; whereupon, motioning to his slaves, they

respectfully seated Beber upon a cushion, and served him with coffee. After a short pause Giaffar recommenced his interrogatories. "How is it, my friend, that a man possessing the immense wealth contained in these jewels should make so bad an appearance? By my beard, I took you for some runaway slave! How is this, I say?" "Most wise brother," replied Beber, gaining courage as he proceeded, "you must know the vanity of embroidered garments: gravity of dress delights the wise. He who hath not sense sufficient to prefer the sweet sobriety of the cinnamon bark to the nauseating odour of its flowers, deserves not the fragrance of the wood, but the effluvia of the blossom." "Brother," replied Giaffar—for he had now an artful game to play—"it is a wise defence of a worthy custom. You will pardon the choleric reception I gave you; and so, now for business. You, it seems, are a jewel merchant. I can tell you good fortune has directed your steps hither. There is not one, in the whole city of Bassora, who can do you so good a turn as myself. I am, at the present time, commissioned to buy some valuable gems: these appear of extraordinary beauty; although perhaps I am wrong to say as much—for a good trader will not praise the foot of a camel he is bargaining for. However, this night we will give to harmless pleasure, and to-morrow we will talk of trade." By these fair words did Giaffar wholly gain over to his confidence the unsuspecting Beber. "Bacroc!" said Giaffar—and an ugly, foul-visaged slave approached him—"bring hither that peculiar drink with which I treat the fortunate few whom I condescend to receive in love and friendship." The slave quickly brings the desired liquor, which Giaffar presents in a golden vessel to his easy guest. "Honour to the Prophet! this is surely not wine." "Wine!" replied Giaffar, in

seeming anger ; “but you are a stranger, and know not that I have thrice travelled to Mecca’s holy shrine. Wine in the dwelling-place of the faithful !”

Beber, not wishing again to excite violence, the character of which he so well remembered (for his leg, though it had been attended to by the slaves, still at intervals pained him grievously), drank off the potion, to the evident satisfaction of Giaffar. Beber, in his agitation, had not discovered the Moth with the Golden Wings, which fluttered around him whilst he held the vessel in his hand, but vanished on the instant he emptied it. “There is but one God !” stammered Beber, as he took the cup from his lips, and, trembling in every part, he fell senseless to the earth. Giaffar on this exclaimed to Baeroc and his fellows, “Dispose of the fool !” and, carrying with him Beber’s bag of jewels, he re-entered the house. The slaves, with whom we shall for a time leave Beber, bear him insensible from the garden.

Now it so happened that Giaffar was a great favourite of the Sultan, who had entrusted him with a vast sum of money to purchase jewels, which his highness intended to present his daughter on her approaching marriage. Early in the morning the chief of the Sultan’s eunuchs, with a suitable train, waited upon Giaffar, to demand of him the success of his mission. Giaffar received the messenger with all possible dignity, and ceremoniously placed in his hand, enveloped in a rich cloth of gold, the silken bag and jewels of the luckless Beber. “Thrice fortunate am I, the slave of the Sultan, in having been so quickly and so admirably suited with that desired by my master. You hold, my good Mesrour, jewels of the most astonishing beauty ; they shine even as lumps of the sun.” Upon hearing this the eunuch was about to indulge his eyesight with a peep at his splendid charge, when he was prevented by Giaffar :

"Pardon me, good Mesrour; but Mahomet forbid that I should permit any one to look upon the jewels before his greatness the Sultan himself." Mesrour, being a subtle courtier, felt the full force of such an objection, and, saluting Giaffar, quitted him for the presence of the Sultan.

Arrived at the palace, Mesrour found the Sultan and his court assembled in full state. The eunuch, prostrating himself before the throne, delivered into the hands of the Sultan the purchase of Giaffar. "He is a good and a faithful servant," said the Sultan, as he directed the golden napkin to be taken from the jewels. "Know," he continued, "it pleaseth us to inform the faithful, that we intend to bestow one of our daughters in marriage, and therefore have entrusted our good servant Giaffar to purchase the bridal present." On this a murmur of applause ran through the court, which was, however, speedily turned into astonishment, when, on the Sultan's snatching from his officer the contents of the golden cloth, he displayed to the court a heap of withered buds of flowers, entangled in a large cobweb!

"Mesrour!" exclaimed the Sultan, "how is this? I send you for jewels, and you dare to bring me shrivelled flowers in the web of a spider."

All the court stood aghast as Mesrour, prostrating himself before the throne, briefly, yet tremblingly, uttered: "Commander of the Faithful, such as I received such have I given to you!"

"Ah! Giaffar mocks our tenderness and clemency! By the beard of my father, he dies! bring me his head!" It takes but a short time for Mesrour to depart from the court, to seize the person of Giaffar, and to bring the astonished culprit before the vengeful front of his master.

“How is this, slave?” questioned the Sultan. “Are these your jewels?” and he showed to the perturbed favourite the worthless fragments he had sent. It was in vain for Giaffar to protest that he must have dealt with a magician; that they were, on the last night, the most beautiful jewels: the Sultan orders the execution of Giaffar, and the court-crier proclaims through the principal streets of Bassora that, in two hours, Giaffar, the late favourite of the Sultan, is to be beheaded in the presence of the court.

Let us now return to Beber, whom the slaves of Giaffar left in an unfrequented part of Bassora, insensible and almost naked. Twice did Bacroc think of despatching him, when his fellows, touched with some little compassion, dissuaded him from the deed by assuring him that Beber, being a stranger in Bassora and unacquainted with either the mansion or the name of Giaffar, could not, even if he survived the effects of the soporific potion, be in any way dangerous. Beber, however, triumphed over the terrors of the night; and, waking in the morning, found himself hungry, penniless, and almost naked. The recollection of the events of the preceding evening came over him, and he was about to inveigh bitterly against his destiny, when his good spirits came to his aid, and he took from a neighbouring reservoir a handful of water, saying, before he drank, “I put the sweetmeat of resignation into the stream, and, lo! I am nourished.” He no sooner had swallowed the water than he found his mouth filled with an admirable set of teeth! Beber was overcome with wonders; he was lately become intimate with miracles, therefore he neither shouted nor danced, but meekly said, “There is but one God, and he is great!” Now Beber, as he strolled through the streets of Bassora, heard by chance the proclamation of the intended execution of Giaffar, and, suffering himself to be

mingled in the crowd, he entered the large court, where the Sultan and his officers were assembled. When the order was given for the appearance of the culprit, what was the surprise of Beber to see in the person of the malefactor the knavish jewel merchant.

"Shall I also accuse him?" said Beber to himself. "No; let not the hand strike him already down." As this rejoinder passed through the brain of Beber his blasted arm became whole and sinewy; the last of his infirmities was cured, and now was Beber a healthful and a complete man. Preparations are now made for instant execution; the Sultan remains obdurate to the prayers of the condemned, who now walks to the fatal spot round the circle made by the spectators. As he is just finishing his circuit, he stops short at Beber, and, pointing him out, shouts aloud, "Commander of the Faithful, here is the culprit—here is he who sold me the jewels!"

The ceremony of death is for a time suspended; and Beber, arraigned at the throne, briefly describes to the Sultan his meeting with Giaffar: how he had been despoiled by him of his jewels, and otherwise ill-used by him.

"Jewels, dog!" exclaimed Giaffar; "were they not withered flowers?" "Answer, slave!" thunders forth the Sultan. "Commander of the Faithful," replies Beber with good heart, for he sees at this moment the Moth with the Golden Wings hovering over him; "they were jewels when I gave them into the keeping of Giaffar; albeit his wickedness may have transformed them." "This is invention, slave; think you we are to be fooled with tales of the genii; take you the buds and the cobweb, and then own your treachery." These articles are given to Beber, who no sooner touches them than they become, one by one, a jewel, enclosed as before in a bag of silk! All the court are

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astounded at the feat. "This, however," said the Sultan, "may be the art of some damnable magician." "Indeed, your highness," replies Beber, "I am none; I know of no powers save those of moral good and evil." "And is it your power of good that transforms flowers into gems?" "Let it be tried," replies Beber, "by making Giaffar touch a jewel; we shall then see what arts he made use of with your poor servant's wealth." "It is well; come hither, slave," says the Sultan to Giaffar; "touch with your finger the diamond in my turban." No sooner is it done than the stone turns into a blighted lily, and the Sultan, frantic at the change, is rushing with his drawn scimitar on Giaffar, when Beber, throwing himself before him, exclaims: "Defender of the Faithful, let me stand between your greatness and your wrath;" and Beber touching the withered flower, it again becomes a diamond.

All the court are paralysed with astonishment; and the Sultan is about to question Beber, when suddenly a beautiful palm tree rises at the foot of the throne. The Moth with the Golden Wings settles on a large palm leaf, which is instantly plucked, and found to bear the following words, which were read aloud by the order of the Sultan to the assembled people:—

"I speak for my mistress, the fairy Gezert. Ask not, oh Sultan! the reason of this mystery; for know, that in the hand of the good and faithful the bud of the rose becometh a ruby, whilst the finger of the wicked maketh a diamond as nought. I was in pain, and a captive, and the poor man gave me freedom; his tenderness hath been his reward. To try the feeling of man, I put off my form and took that of an insect. I have found evil and cruelty in the great; I have found love and mercy in the lowly. Oh, Sultan! he who for sport tortureth a fly would, but for the law, tear

away an arm. Oh, Sultan ! let the merciful be rewarded, the guilty punished ; and let this precept be ever in thy mind, and in the souls of thy people—*That in the hand of the good and faithful the bud of the rose becometh a ruby, whilst the finger of the wicked maketh a diamond as nought.*"

Scarcely has the officer finished reading, when the leaf escapes from his hand in sunlight, the trunk of the palm-tree becomes a pillar of water, spouting off and falling in the shape of branches and leaves. It has ever been approached with veneration by the people of Bassora, and is called by them the Fountain of the Fairy Moth.

A few words will now close the tale. Giaffar was delivered into the hands of the executioner, and Beber was dignified with riches and honours by the gratitude of the Sultan.

FIRESIDE SAINTS.

ST. PATTY.

ST. PATTY was an orphan, and dwelt in a cot with a sour old aunt. It chanced, it being bitter cold, that three hunters came and craved for meat and drink. "Pack!" said the sour aunt, "neither meat nor drink have ye here." "Neither meat nor drink," said Patty; "but something better." And she ran and brought some milk, some eggs, and some flour, and, beating them up, poured the batter in the pan. Then she took the pan and tossed the cake over; and then a robin alighted at the window, and kept singing these words—*One good turn deserves another*. And Patty tossed and tossed the cakes; and the hunters ate their fill and departed. And next day the hunter-baron came in state to the cot; and trumpets were blown, and the heralds cried—*One good turn deserves another*; in token whereof Patty became the baron's wife, and pancakes were eaten on Shrove Tuesday ever after.

ST. SALLY.

St. Sally, from her childhood, was known for her innermost love of truth. It was said of her that her heart was in a crystal shrine, and all the world might see it. Moreover, when other women denied, or strove to hide their age, St. Sally said, "I am five-and-thirty." Whereupon next birthday St. Sally's husband, at a feast of all their friends, gave

her a necklace of six-and-thirty opal beads ; and on every birthday added a bead, until the beads mounted to four-score and one. And the beads seemed to act as a charm ; for St. Sally, wearing the sum of her age about her neck, age never appeared in her face. Such, in the olden time, was the reward of simplicity and truth.

ST. BETSY.

St. Betsy was wedded to a knight who sailed with Raleigh and brought home tobacco ; and the knight smoked. But he thought that St. Betsy, like other fine ladies of the court, would fain that he should smoke out of doors, nor taint with 'bacco-smoke the tapestry. Whereupon the knight would seek his garden, his orchard, and in any weather smoke *sub Jove*. Now it chanced as the knight smoked St. Betsy came to him and said, " My lord, pray ye come into the house." And the knight went with St. Betsy, who took him into a newly-cedared room, and said, " I pray, my lord, henceforth smoke here : for is it not a shame that you, who are the foundation and the prop of your house, should have no place to put your head into and smoke ?" And St. Betsy led him to a chair, and with her own fingers filled him a pipe ; and from that time the knight sat in the cedar chamber and smoked his weed.

ST. PHILLIS.

St. Phillis was a virgin of noble parentage, but withal as simple as any shepherdess of curds and cream. She married a wealthy lord, and had much pin-money. But when other ladies wore diamond and pearls, St. Phillis only wore a red and white rose in her hair. Yet her pin-money brought the best of jewellery in the happy eyes of the poor about her. St. Phillis was rewarded. She lived until

fourscore, and still carried the red and white rose in her face, and left their fragrance in her memory.

ST. PHŒBE.

St. Phœbe was married early to a wilful, but withal a good-hearted husband. He was a merchant, and would come home sour and sullen from 'change. Whereupon, after much pondering, St. Phœbe in her patience set to work and, praying the while, made of dyed lambswool a door-mat. And it chanced from that time, that never did the husband touch that mat that it didn't clean his temper with his shoes, and he sat down by his Phœbe as mild as the lamb whose wool he had trod upon. Thus gentleness may make miraculous door-mats!

ST. NORAH.

St. Norah was a poor girl, and came to England to service. Sweet-tempered and gentle, she seemed to love everything she spoke to; and she prayed to St. Patrick that he would give her a good gift that would make her not proud, but useful; and St. Patrick, out of his own head, taught St. Norah how to boil a potato—a sad thing, and to be lamented, that the secret has come down to so few.

ST. BECKY.

A very good man was St. Becky's husband, but with his heart a little too much in his bottle. Port wine—red port wine—was his delight, and his constant cry was—bee's-wing. Now as he sat tipsy in his arbour, a wasp dropped into his glass, and the wasp was swallowed, stinging the man inwardly. Doctors crowded, and with much ado the man's life was saved. Now St. Becky nursed her husband tenderly to health, and upbraided him not; but she said

these words, and they reformed him :—" *My dear, take wine, and bless your heart with it—but wine in moderation: else, never forget that the bee's wing of to-day becomes the wasp's sting of to-morrow.*"

ST. LILY.

St. Lily was the wife of a poor man, who tried to support his family—and the children were many—by writing books. But in those days it was not as easy for a man to find a publisher as to say his paternoster. Many were the books that were written by the husband of St. Lily; but to every book St. Lily gave at least two babes. However, blithe as the cricket was the spirit that ruled about the hearth of St. Lily. And how she helped her helpmate! She smiled sunbeams into his ink bottle, and turned his goose pen to the quill of a dove! She made the paper he wrote on as white as her name, and as fragrant as her soul. And when folks wondered how St. Lily managed so lightly with fortune's troubles, she always answered, that she never heeded them, for *troubles were like babies, and only grew the bigger by nursing.*

ST. FANNY.

St. Fanny was a notable housewife. Her house was a temple of neatness. Kings might have dined upon her staircase! Now her great delight was to provide all things comfortable for her husband, a hard-working merchant, much abroad, but loving his home. Now one night he returned tired and hungry, and, by some mischance, there was nothing for supper. Shops were shut; and great was the grief of St. Fanny. Taking off a bracelet of seed pearl she said, "*I'd give this ten times over for a supper for my husband.*" And every pearl straightway became an oyster, and St. Fanny opened—the husband ate—and lo! in every

oyster was a pearl as big as a hazel nut ; and so was St. Fanny made rich for life.

ST. DOLLY.

At an early age St. Dolly showed the sweetness of her nature by her tender love for her widowed father, a baker, dwelling at Pie Corner, with a large family of little children. It chanced that with bad harvests bread became so dear that, of course, bakers were ruined by high prices. The miller fell upon Dolly's father, and swept the shop with his golden thumb. Not a bed was left for the baker or his little ones. St. Dolly slept upon a flour sack, having prayed that good angels would help her to help her father. Now sleeping, she dreamt that the oven was lighted, and she felt falling in a shower about her raisins, currants, almonds, lemon peel, flour, with heavy drops of brandy. Then in her dreams she saw the fairies gather up the things that fell and knead them into a cake. They put the cake into the oven, and dancing round and round, the fairies vanished, crying, "*Draw the cake, Dolly—Dolly, draw the cake!*" And Dolly awoke and drew the cake, and, behold, it was the first twelfth cake, sugared at the top, and bearing the images of Faith, Hope, and Charity. Now this cake, shown in the window, came to the king's ear ; and the king bought the cake, knighted the baker, and married Dolly to his grand falconer, to whom she proved a faithful and loving wife, bearing him a baker's dozen of lovely children.

ST. FLORENCE OR ST. NIGHTINGALE.

St. Florence, by her works, had her lips blessed with comforting, and her hands touched with healing ; and she crossed the sea, and built hospitals, and solaced, and restored. And so long as English mistletoe gathers

beneath it truthful hearts, and English holly brightens happy eyes, so long will Englishmen, at home or abroad, on land or on the wave—so long, in memory of that Eastern Christmas, will they cry—*God bless St. Florence! Bless St. Nightingale!*

ST. JENNY.

St. Jenny was wedded to a very poor man ; they had scarcely bread to keep them ; but Jenny was of so sweet a temper that even want bore a bright face, and Jenny always smiled. In the worst seasons Jenny would spare crumbs for the birds, and sugar for the bees. Now it so happened that one autumn a storm rent their cot in twenty places apart ; when, behold, between the joists, from the basement to the roof, there was nothing but honeycomb and honey—a little fortune for St. Jenny and her husband, in honey. Now some said it was the bees, but more declared it was the sweet temper of St. Jenny that had filled the poor man's house with honey.

SHAKESPEARE AT CHARLECOTE PARK.

It was a fine May morning when the bailiff of Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecote, attended by some half-dozen serving men, rode quickly through the streets of Stratford, and halted at the abode of his worship the Mayor. The children in the street stood mute, and stared; gossips ran to door and casement; Thrums, the tailor, mechanically twitched off his cap, and for a moment forgot the new bridal jerkin of Martin Lapworth, the turner, of Henley Street; John-a-Combe, the thrifty money-scrivener, startled from a sum of arithmetic, watched the horsemen with peering eyes and open mouth; and every face expressed astonishment and surmise as the horses' hoofs tore up the road, and the arms of the riders rang and clattered; and their visages, burly and glowing, showed as of men bearing mighty tidings. Had a thunderbolt fallen in the marketplace, it could not more suddenly have broken the tranquillity of Stratford than had the sudden visit of Sir Thomas Lucy's retainers. Every one pressed to the Mayor's house to learn the tidings, and in a brief time one, taking up the fears of his neighbour for the truth, told an inquiring third that the swarthy Spaniard, with a thousand ships, had entered the Thames; that her gracious highness the Queen was a close prisoner in the Tower, and that the damnable papists had carried the host through the city, and had performed High Mass in the Abbey of Westminster. This

rumour was opposed by another, averring that the Queen had drunk poison in a quart of sherris (a beverage much loved by her highness)—whilst a fourth story told of her private marriage with the Master of the Horse. Great wonderment followed on each tale. Some vowed they would never be brought to speak Spanish, others religiously called for fire upon all Catholics—whilst more than one good housewife hoped that in all reasonable time her Majesty would bring forth a prince. Stratford was the very court-place for rumour; old, yellow Avon paused in his course, astonished at the hum and buzz that came with every wind.

At length the truth became manifest. No Spanish bottom poisoned the Thames; no Spanish flag blasted the air of England. Elizabeth yet gripped her sceptre—yet indulged in undrugged sack and cold virginity. Still it was no mean event that could thrust seven of Sir Thomas Lucy's men into their saddles, and send them galloping, like so many St. Georges, to the Mayor of Stratford. Thus it was then; the park of Sir Thomas had been entered on the over-night, and one fine head of fallow deer stolen from the pasturage, whilst another was found sorely maimed, sobbing out its life among the underwood. The marauders were known, and Sir Thomas had sent to his worship to apprehend the evil-doers, and despatch them under a safe guard to the hall of Charlecote. This simple story mightily disappointed the worthy denizens of Stratford, and, for the most part, sent them back to their various business. Many, however, lingered about his worship's dwelling to catch a view of the culprits—for they were soon in custody—and many a head was thrust from the windows to look at the offenders, as, mounted on horseback, and well guarded on all sides by Sir Thomas Lucy's servants and the constables

of Stratford, they took their way through the town, and, crossing the Avon, turned on the left to Charlecote.

There were four criminals, and all in the first flush of manhood ; they rode as gaily among their guards as though each carried a hawk upon his fist and were ambling to the sound of Milan bells. One of the culprits was specially distinguished from his companions, more by the perfect beauty of his face than by the laughing unconcern that shone in it. He seemed about twenty-two years of age, of somewhat more than ordinary stature, his limbs combining gracefulness of form with manly strength. He sat upon his saddle as though he grew there. His countenance was of extraordinary sweetness. He had an eye, at once so brilliant and so deep, so various in its expression, so keenly piercing, yet so meltingly soft—an eye so wonderful and instant in its power as though it could read the whole world at a glance—such an eye as hardly ever shone within the face of man ; it was not an eye of flesh—it was a living soul. His nose and chin were shaped as with a chisel from the fairest marble ; his mouth looked instinct with thought, yet as sweet and gentle in its expression as is an infant's when it dreams and smiles. And as he doffed his hat to a fair head that looked mournfully at him from an upper casement, his broad forehead bared out from his dark curls in surpassing power and amplitude. It seemed a tablet writ with a new world.

The townspeople gazed at the young man, and some of them said, " Poor Will Shakespeare !" Others said, "'Twas a sore thing to get a child for the gallows !" and one old crone lifted up her lean hands and cried, " God help poor Anne Hathaway, she had better married the tailor !" Some prophesied a world of trouble for the young man's parents ; many railed him as a scapegrace given to loose

companions, a mischievous varlet, a midnight roysterer; but the greater number only cried, "Poor Will Shakespeare!" It was but a short ride to the hall, yet ere the escort had arrived there Sir Thomas Lucy with some choice guests were seated at dinner.

Hereupon the constables were ordered to take especial care of the culprits, who were forthwith consigned to the darkest and strongest cellar at Charlecote. Here, at least, it was thought that Will Shakespeare would abate somewhat of his unseemly hardihood, for all the way to the mansion he had laughed and jested and made riddles on the constables' beards, and sang snatches of profane songs, and kissed his fingers to the damsels on the road, and, indeed, "showed himself," as a discreet, observing nun declared, "little better than a child of Satan." In the cellar he and his co-mates, it was thought, would mend their manners. "As they do not learn to respect God, and worship Sir Thomas, and honour deer's flesh, as good Christians ought—and they learn not these things in the dark—'tis to waste God's gifts upon 'em to let 'em see the light of day." Thus spoke Ralph Elder, constable of Stratford, to one of the grooms of Charlecote. "I tell you, John," continued the functionary, "Will Shakespeare's horse didn't stumble for nothing at the field of hemp. God save poor babes born to be hanged, for 'tis no constable's affair—— Hush! mercy on us, they laugh—laugh like lords!"

To the shame of the prisoners be it spoken, the discourse of Ralph was broken by a loud shout from the cellar. To add to the abomination, the captives trolled forth in full concert a song—"a scornful thing," as Ralph afterwards declared it, "against the might and authority of Sir Thomas Lucy." The men, the maids—all flocked to the cellar door, while the dungeon of the prisoners rang with their shouting

voices. "It was thus they glorified," as Ralph avowed,
 "in their past iniquities"—

" 'Twas yester morning, as I walked adown by Charlecote Meads,
 And counting o'er my wicked sins, as friars count their beads ;
 I halted just beside a deer—a deer with speaking face,
 That seem'd to say, 'In God's name come and take me from this
 place !'

And then it 'gan to tell its tale—and said its babe forlorn
 Had butcher'd been for Lucy's dish soon after it was born ;
 'I know 'tis right !' exclaimed the dam, 'my child should form a
 feast,
 But what I most complain of is, that beast should dine off beast !'

And still the creature mourn'd its fate, and how it came to pass
 That Lucy here a scarecrow is, in London town an ass !¹
 And ended still its sad complaints with offers of its life,
 And twenty hundred times exclaimed, 'Oh ! haven't you a knife ?'

There's brawny limbs in Stratford town, there's hearts without a fear,
 There's tender souls who really have compassion on a deer ;
 And last night was without a moon, a night of nights to give
 Fit dying consolation to a deer that may not live.

The dappled brute lay on the grass, a knife was in its side ;
 Another from its yearning throat let forth its vital tide.
 It said, as tho' escaping from the worst that could befall,
 'Now, thank my stars, I shall not smoke on board at Charlecote
 Hall !'

Oh, happy deer ! Above your friends exalted high by fate,
 You're not condemned like all the herds to Lucy's glutton plate ;
 But every morsel of your flesh, from shoulder to the haunch,
 Tho' bred and killed in Charlecote Park, hath lined an honest paunch."

The household were truly scandalised at this bravado.
 The night came on, and still the prisoners sang and laughed.

¹ "In the country a scarecrow, in London an ass !"—*Shakespeare's Satire on Sir Thomas Lucy.*

In the morning Sir Thomas took his chair of state, and ordered the culprits to his presence. The servants hurried to the cellar—but the birds were flown. How they effected their escape remaineth to this day a mystery, though it cannot be disguised that heavy suspicion fell upon four of the maids. The story went that Shakespeare was a day or two afterwards passed on the London road.

This tale was corroborated by John-a-Combes. For, many years afterwards, a townsman of Stratford, who had quitted his native place for the Indies just at the time that Warwickshire rang with the deeds of the deer-stealers, returned home, and amongst other gossip was heard to ask the thrifty money-getter what became of that rare spark, Will Shakespeare; him who entered Sir Thomas's park at Charlecote? "Marry, sir," replied John; "the worst has become of him, for after that robbery he went to London, where he turned stage actor, and writ plays, *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and such things."

SHAKESPEARE AT "BANK-SIDE."¹

THE bell of St. Mary Overy had struck three ; the flag was just displayed from the Rose play-house ; and, rustling in the wind, was like, in the words of the pious Philip Stubbes, "unto a false harlot, flaunting the unwary onward to destruction and to death." Barges and boats, filled with the flower of the court-end and the city, crowded to the bridge. Gallants, in the pride of new cloak and doublet, leaped to the shore, making rich the strand with many a fair gentlewoman lifted all tenderly from the craft ; horses pranced along Bank-side, spurred by their riders to the door of the tiring-room ; nay, there was no man, woman, or child who did not seem beckoned by the Rose flag to the play,—whose ears did not drink in the music of the trumpets, as though it was the most ravishing sound of the earth. At length the trumpets ceased, and the play began.

The Rose was crammed. In the penny gallery was many an apprentice unlawfully dispensing his master's time—it might be, his master's penny too. Many a husband, slunk from a shrew's pipe and hands, was there, to list and shake

¹ According to Rowe's story, related to Pope, Shakespeare's first employment in London was to wait at the door of the play-house and hold the horses of those that had no servants, that they might be ready after the performance. "But I cannot," says Mr. Steevens, "dismiss this anecdote without observing, that it seems to want every mark of probability."

the head at the player's tale of wedded love. Nor here and there was wanting, peeping from a nook, with cap pulled over the brow, and ruff huddled about the neck, the sly, happy face of one, who yesterday gave an assenting groan to the charitable wonder of a godly neighbour—of one who marvelled that the Rose flag should flout the heavens, yet call not down the penal fire. The yard was thronged ; and on the stage was many a bird of courtly feather, perched on his sixpenny stool ; whilst the late comer lay at length upon the rushes, his thoughts wrested from his hose and points by the mystery of the play.

Happy, thrice happy wights, thus fenced and rounded in from the leprous, eating cares of life ! Happy ye, who, even with a penny piece, can transport yourselves into a land of fairy—can lull the pains of flesh with the music of high thoughts ! The play goes on, with all its influences. Where is the courtier ? Ten thousand miles from the glassy floor of a palace, lying on a bank, listening to a reed piping in Arcady. Where the man of thrift ? He hath shuffled off his trading suit, and dreams himself a shepherd of the golden time. Where the wife-ridden husband, doubtful of a natural right to his own soul ? He is an Indian emperor, flushed with the mastery of ten thousand slaves ! Where is the poor apprentice—he who hath weals upon his back for twopence lost on Wednesday ? He is in El Dorado, strutting upon gold. Thus works the play—let it go on. Our business calls us to the outside.

There is scarcely a passenger to be seen on Bank-side. Three or four boys loiter about the theatre, some trying, through a deceitful crevice, to catch a glimpse of the play—some tending horses, until the show be done. Apart from these, his arms crossed, leaning against a post, his eyes fixed on the Rose flag,—stands a youth, whose face, though

perfect in its beauty, has yet a troubled air. As he stands, watching the rustling beacon, it almost seems—so fixed is his look—as though he held some converse with it; as though the fortunes of his future life were woven in its web in mystic characters, and he, with his spirit straining from his eyes, were seeking to decipher them. Now—so would imagination work—there seemed voluble speech in its flapping folds, and now a visible face. The youth turned from gazing on the flag to the open river. Some spirit was upon him; and, through his eyes, gave to vulgar objects a new and startling form. He was in a day-dream of wonder and beauty; and as it told that those doomed to the ocean with hearts yearning for the land see fields and pleasant gardens in the heaving wave,—so our hero, tricked by his errant fancy, gazed breathless at new wonders sweeping before him. A golden mist shrouded the mansions and warehouses on the strand. Each common thing of earth glowed and dilated under the creative spirit of the dreamer. The Thames seemed fixed—whilst a thousand forms moved along the silver pavement. The sky shone brighter—harmony was in the air! The shades move on.

First passes one bearing in his hand a skull: wisdom is in his eyes, music on his tongue—the soul of contemplation in the flesh of an Apollo: the greatest wonder and the deepest truth—the type of great thought and sickly fancies—the arm of clay, wrestling with and holding down the angel. He looks at the skull, as though death had written on it the history of man. In the distance one white arm is seen above the tide, clutching at the branches of a willow “growing askant a brook.”

Now there are sweet, fitful noises in the air: a shaggy monster, his lips glued to a bottle—his eyes scarlet with wine—wine throbbing in the very soles of his feet—heaves

and rolls along, mocked at by a sparkling creature couched in a cowslip's bell.

And now a maiden and a youth, an eternity of love in their passionate looks, with death as a hooded priest joining their hands: a gay gallant follows them, led on by Queen Mab, twisting and sporting as a porker's tail.

The horns sound—all, all is sylvan! Philosophy in hunter's suit, stretched beneath an oak, moralises on a wounded deer, festering, neglected, and alone: and now the bells of folly jingle in the breeze, and the suit of motley glances among the greenwood.

The earth is blasted—the air seems full of spells: the shadows of the fates darken the march of the conqueror: the hero is stabbed with air-drawn steel.

The waves roar like lions round the cliff: the winds are up, and howling; yet there is a voice, louder than theirs—a voice made high and piercing by intensest agony! The singer comes, his white head "crowned with rank fumitor"—madness, tended by truth, speaking through folly!

The Adriatic basks in the sun: there is a street in Venice; "a merry bargain" is struck—the Jew slinks like a balked tiger from the court.

Enter a pair of legs, marvellously cross-gartered.

And hark! to a sound of piping, comes one with an ass's head wreathed with musk roses and a spirit playing around it like a wildfire.

A handkerchief, with "magic in the web," comes like a trail of light, and disappears.

A leek—a leek of immortal green shoots up!

Behold! like to the *San Trinidad*, swims in a buck-basket labelled "to Datchet Meads."

There gleam two roses, red and white—a Roman cloak

stabbed through and through—a lantern of the watch of Messina!

A thousand images of power and beauty pass along.

The glorious pageant is over—no! fancy is yet at work.—

Yonder ship, laden with sherries, canary, and spice—see how her masts and rigging fall and melt, like metal in a furnace! Her huge hold, stowed to the deck with wine, swells and distends, and takes another form. We see no ship, but a man mountain, with a belly that "would sink a navy." One butt of red wine is sinking in the Thames: no; it moves and shapes itself into something like a nose, which, rising like a comet, fiery red, before him of the abdomen, seems as 'twere purposed for a torch to light him "'twixt tavern and tavern." And sec—

But the day-dream of the youth is broken. A visitor, mounted, has just arrived, and would fain enter the play-house; but there is none bold or strong enough to hold his steed. At least a dozen men—it was remarkable that each had in his bosom a roll of paper, it might be the draft of a play—rushing from the Rose, strove to hold the bridle: but some the horse trod down—some he struck paralytic with his flashing eye—some ran away, half distraught at his terrible neighing. At length our dreamer approached the steed, which, as it had been suddenly turned to stone, stood still. The rider dismounted and entered the play-house, leaving his horse tended by our hero. The animal ate from out his hand—answered with its proud head the caresses of its feeder—and, as it pranced and curveted, a sound of music, as from the horny hoofs of dancing satyrs, rose from the earth. All stood amazed at the sudden taming of the horse.

The play ended—the audience issued from the doors.

The story had run from mouth to mouth, touching the new-comer and his horse. All hurried about the stranger, to see him mount. He, with some difficulty, such was the crowd, leaped on his steed, when, inclining his face, radiant with smiles, towards the youth who had performed the office of his groom, he flashed like a sunbeam out of sight. All stood marble with astonishment. At length the immortal quality of the visitor was made manifest, for, in the press and hurry, a feather had fallen from one of his wings—albeit, concealed and guarded by a long cloak.

The youth who had taken charge of the horse seized, as his rightful wages, on this relic of Phœbus, and, taking his way, he fashioned it into a pen, and with it from time to time gave to the "airy nothings" of his day-dream "a local habitation and a name."

It is modestly hoped that this well-authenticated story will wholly silence the sceptical objections of Mr. Steevens.

SHAKESPEARE IN CHINA.

"I cannot tell that the wisest Mandarin now living in China is not indebted for part of his energy and sagacity to Shakespeare and Milton, even though it should happen that he never heard of their names."

—Godwin's "Essay on Sepulchres."

WE do great injustice to the College of Mandarins, if we think that body at the present time ignorant of the marvels of Shakespeare. No : Canton has produced its commentator, and, by means of his explanatory genius, it is hoped that in a few years the whole Celestial Empire will, in the fulness of its knowledge, bow to the majesty of the poet. At this moment we have before us a radiant evidence of the admission of the great teacher into the Sacred City : believe it, astounded reader, Shakespeare has gone farther than Nieuhoff. England, however—that England who has shown herself such an idolatress of her darling son—who has encircled the house in which he first drew breath with a golden rail—who has secured it from possible destruction at the hands of the bigot, by making it the property of the State—that England who, when the tree planted by the bard was felled by the axe, wept as she turned the timber into 'bacco-stoppers¹—that England who, even at the present time, only a little more than two centuries after his death, has already begun to think of the propriety of

¹ The Mulberry-tree was cut down ; and the race of Gastrels is not extinct.—D. J.

erecting, at some future day, a national monument to her poet—that England cannot, after the many and affecting instances of her deep and maternal love towards her most illustrious child, refuse to aid in the dissemination of Shakespearianity in any corner of the world, but at the present interesting crisis, more particularly in the empire of China.

The cry that the Chinese are not yet fit for Shakespeare—a cry raised in the same acute spirit in which people in chains have been said not to be fit for freedom—can, we think, have no bad effect on even moderately liberal men, after the production of papers now beneath our hands. All we ask of the Foreign Minister is a company, to act either on board Chinese junks or on shore, as the intellectual wants of his Majesty may require; nay, if under the direction of their own stage-manager, to exhibit themselves at any distance in the interior. The company to be paid and clothed by the government for whose benefit they act, with this condition, that they be subject to the laws and customs of the Chinese, obediently shaving their eyebrows and letting their tails grow. For the passing difficulty of the language, that, we have no doubt, will soon be overcome; many of the actors, we religiously believe it, speaking and playing equally well in English or in Chinese. We now come to the proofs of the fit condition of the people for Shakespeare—for that which they will “hail as a boon,” and which we shall part with as a drug.

Some months since, it was our fortune to be present at an auction of curiosities from the East—shells, parrots, rice-paper, chop-sticks, japanned cabinets, and cut-throat sparrows. Our friend Peregrine—he had just arrived from the Great Pyramid, from the top of which, and by means of a most excellent glass, he had discovered, and after made

captive, three giraffes—bade money for a picture. As it was a scene from Shakespeare, there were of course no opposing bidders, and he became the owner of what proved to be an exquisite evidence of Chinese art and imitation ; in brief, no other than a copy faithfully drawn, and most brilliantly coloured by an artist at Canton of the Boydell picture of Falstaff in the Buck-basket, and the Merry Wives. The picture, however, proved in itself to be of little value compared to the essay found to be inserted at the back between the picture and the frame ; being written on paper, half a quire of which would not exceed the thickness of a butterfly's wing, it is no wonder that the treasure escaped even the meritorious vigilance of an auctioneer. It is this essay that we now propose to submit to the reader, in evidence of the condition of China for an instant export of a company of fine Shakesperian actors. When we state that the essay has been printed by its author in at least one of the Canton journals, the dissemination and adoption of the principles comprised in it, over the whole of China, cannot for half a moment be a matter of doubt.

We regret that we cannot wholly acquit our intelligent Mandarin of the taint of ingratitude. It is evident that his views of English history—at least of that portion in which Falstaff conspicuously appears, for the writer suffers no subject to escape in any way involved in the character of the immortal knight—have been gathered from one of our fellow-countrymen ; he has, if we may be allowed to say it, sucked the brain, as a “ weasel sucks eggs,” of some enlightened but obscure supercargo whom he has left unhonoured and unthanked. How different, in a similar case, was the conduct of an Englishman : our deep veneration of the national character will not, at this happy moment, suffer us to be silent on the grateful magnanimity of Mr. Nahum

Tate, who, in his preface to his improved version of *King Lear*, returns his "thanks to an *ingenious friend* who first pointed out the tragedy" to his condescending notice! The silence of the Mandarin towards his instructor is the more strange, as ingratitude is not the vice of the barbarian. An ingenious friend points out a skulking, unarmed straggler to a Cossack; the soldier makes him prisoner, cuts off his ears, slits his nose, bores his tongue, and having mounted the captive behind him, in the cordial spirit of Nahum Tate, "thanks his ingenious friend" for his information! But it is so; in this particular our Mandarin fails in comparison with the Cossack and with Nahum Tate.

We now lay before the reader the Essay of Ching the Mandarin, who, it will be seen, in his orders to the painter employed to copy the original picture—by whom taken to China remains unknown—has, with national exactness, given the birth and education not only of the author of Falstaff, but of Falstaff himself, together with glancing notices of—Windsor wives and Windsor soap.

It is, perhaps, only due to the translator, to state that by our express solicitation he has a little lowered the orientalism of the original, whilst he has at the same time endeavoured to preserve the easy, conversational tone of the educated Chinese.

"CHING TO TING.

"I send, O Ting, from the barbarian ship, a picture of barbarians. Make one for your friend, like unto it; in size, in shape, and colour, even the same. But why should I waste words with Ting, whose pencil is true as the tongue of Confutzee? No; I will straightway deliver to him all my studies have made known to me of the barbarians written on the canvas before him: for how can even Ting paint the

faces of barbarians in their very truth, if he know not the history not only of themselves but of their fathers?

"The he barbarian with the big belly was called Forlstoff, and in time was known as Surgeon Forlstoff: from which, there is no doubt, he was a skilful leech in the army of the barbarian king, more of whom in good season. Forlstoff's father was one Shak or Shake, Speare or Spear; for there have been great tumults among the barbarians about the *e*. In nothing does the ignorance of the English barbarians more lamentably discover itself than in the origin they obstinately give to their Shakespeare; who, according to them, was, like the great Brahme, hatched in an egg on the bank of a river, as may be seen in a thousand idle books in which he is called the 'Swan of Haveone.' And this conceit was further manifested in the building of a place called 'the Swan Theatre,' where the barbarians were wont to worship. There is little known of Shakespeare's wife, Forlstoff's mother, and that little proves her to have been an idle person, given to great sleep and sloth, as is shown by her getting nothing at the death of her husband but his 'second-best bed!'

"If Forlstoff would not, at a later time of life, leave off stealing, there is little doubt that he owed the fault to his father, Shakespeare, who was forced to fly to London, which is a sacred city for all thieves, for having stolen an antelope, an animal consecrated to the higher kinds of barbarians, and which it is death for the poor to touch. Indeed, the flesh of the antelope is to be eaten with safety by very few of the barbarians, it having killed even many of the Eldermen immediately after dinner.

"When Shakespeare came to London he was poor and without friends, and he held the horses of the rich barbarians who came to worship at a temple on the banks

of the river. In time he learned to make shoes for the horses ; and in such esteem are the shoes still held by the barbarians, that they are bought at any price, and nailed at the threshold of their houses and barns ; for where they are nailed, the foolish natives think no fire, no pestilence will come, and no evil thing have any strength. Such is the silly idolatry of the barbarians.

“At length Shakespeare got admitted into the temple ; and there he showed himself master of the greatest arts ; and he wrote charms upon paper which, it is said, will make a man weep or laugh with very happiness,—will bring spirits from the sky and devils from the water,—will open the heart of a man and show what creeps within it,—will now snatch a crown from a king, and now put wings to the back of a beggar. And all this they say Shakespeare did, and studied not. No, beloved Ting, he was not like Sing, who, though but a poor cowherd, became wise by poring on his book spread between the horns of his cow, he travelling on her back.

“And Shakespeare proceeded in his marvels, and he became rich ; and even the queen of the barbarians was seen to smile at him, and once, with a burning look, to throw her glove at him ; but Shakespeare, it is said, to the discomfiture of the queen, returned the glove, taking no further notice of the amatory invitation.

“In a ripe season of his life Shakespeare gave up conjuring, and returned to the village on the banks of the river Haveone, where, as it is ignorantly believed, he was hatched, and where he lived in the fulness of fortune. He had laid down his conjuring-rod and taken off his gown, and passed for nothing more than a man, and, it is said—though you, beloved Ting, who see the haughty eyes and curling noses of the lesser man mandarins, can, after what I have writ of

Shakespeare, hardly believe it—thought himself nothing more.

“Shakespeare built himself a house and planted a tree. The house is gone, but the barbarians preserve bricks of it in their inner chambers, even—I tremble as I pen it—as we preserve the altars of our gods.

“The tree was cut down by a fakir in a brain fever, but the wood is still worshipped. And this, O Ting! I would not ask you to believe had not your own eyes witnessed that wonderful tree,¹ the leaves whereof, falling to the ground, become mice! Hence learn that the leaves of Shakespeare’s mulberry have become men, and on a certain day every year, with mulberry boughs about their heads, their bodies clothed in their richest garments, they chant praises to the memory of Shakespeare, and drink wine to his name.

“Shakespeare—Forlstaff’s father, and the father of a hundred lusty sons and daughters, such as until that time had never been born, Shakespeare—died! He was buried in a chest of cedar, set about with plates of gold. On one of these plates was writ some magic words; for thieves, breaking into the grave, were fixed and changed to stone; and are now to be seen even as they were first struck by the charm of the magician. And so much, beloved Ting, of Shakespeare, Forlstaff’s father.”

That our Mandarin has herein displayed very popular abilities for the difficult task of a commentator, no one who has read many volumes of Shakespearian commentaries will, we believe, deny. It is observable that in many instances he makes his facts; a custom of particular advantage to the indulgence of the most peculiar opinions

¹ See Navarrete’s *China* for the account of this tree; underneath which, we humbly suggest, it would be as well to keep a cat.—D. J.

and conclusions. We have read some writers who, deprived of this privilege, would really have nothing to work upon. The pleasure of making a giant, great as it possibly may be, cannot be comparable to the delight of killing him, our own handiwork. If, however, our reader will bear with us, we will proceed with the labours of Ching on the character of Falstaff, and on those personages and events, directly and indirectly, associated with his glorious name. Falstaff in China! Jack Falstaff on a regimen of rice!

“Forlstaff was born in the third hour of the morning; and at his birth the roundness of his belly and the whiteness of his head betokened his future greatness. But little is known of his early life; save that he assisted in the temples of the barbarians, where his voice, once remarkable for its sweetness, became broken with the zeal of the singer. He then travelled with a juggler, and—if lying were not the especial vice of the barbarians—did greater wonders than even our own Yiyi. The Eldermen of London—so named because chosen from the oldest inhabitants—are known by a ring upon the thumb; this ring Forlstaff, to the admiration of the barbarian court, crept through and through like any worm, and was promoted by the king therefore. I should, however, do evil unto truth did I not advise you, O Ting, that this feat of Forlstaff seems greater than it really is: for a tame eagle being kept at the court of the king, it was afterwards discovered that a talon of the bird was something thicker than the waist of the said Forlstaff.

“It is certain that Forlstaff, a short time after his feat with the ring, became a student in a place called Clemency Inn; which, as its name implies, is a temple wherein youths study to become meek and merciful, to love all men as brothers of their own flesh, and to despise the allurements

of wealth. There was with him another student, called Robert Shaller, who afterwards became a mandarin, or, in the barbarian tongue, a justice of the peace, being promoted to that office because he was like a double radish, and had his head carved with a knife. He was, when at Clemency Inn, dressed in an eel-skin, and used to sleep in a lute-case. He lent Forlstaff what the barbarians call a thousand pounds, which Forlstaff was honest enough to—acknowledge.

“I next find Forlstaff in company with one Princeal, the son of the barbarian king, and several thieves. Forlstaff—and here the vice of his father, Shakespeare, breaks out in the child—tempts the king’s son to turn robber. He is, however, so ashamed of the wickedness, that he goes about it with a mask on his face, as a king’s son ought.

“Forlstaff falls into disgrace with Princeal, and is sent by him with soldiers to Coventry; that being a place in the barbarian country where no man speaks to his neighbour. After some delay Forlstaff marches through Coventry to fight one Pursy, who can ride up a straight hill, and is therefore called Hotspur. Forlstaff fights with him by—that is, near a clock, and kills him, Princeal, the king’s son, meanly endeavouring to deprive Forlstaff of the honour.

“After the battle Forlstaff goes to dine with the king at Wincer, which is the royal manufactory for soap. Forlstaff pretends to love two wives at the same time, and is put by them in what is called by the barbarians a *buck*-basket—that is a basket for the finer sort of barbarians, their word *buck* answering to our *push*, and meaning high, handsome, grand. He is flung into the river, and saves himself by swimming to a garter. He is afterwards punished by being turned into the royal forest, with horns upon his head and chains upon his hands. Princeal, in time, becomes king, and discards Forlstaff, who goes home—goes to bed—does

nothing but look at the ends of his fingers, talks of the green fields about Wincer, and dies.

“For the habits of Forlstaff, if they were not quite as virtuous as those of Fo, it was perhaps the fault of his times ; for we have his own words to prove that they were once those of the best barbarians. He swore but few oaths—gambled but once a day—paid his debts four times—and took recreation only when he cared for it. He loved sack—a liquor that has puzzled the heads of the learned—without eggs, and was extraordinarily temperate in bread.

“His companions were thieves of the highest repute—but all, unhappily, died and left no sons !

“You will now, oh wise and virtuous Ting, directed by these few and feeble words, paint me the picture of Forlstaff and his two wives.”

We put it to the impartial reader whether Ching, in the above estimate of the character of Falstaff, has not entitled himself to take rank with many Shakespearian commentators ; and whether, if the Foreign Minister will not consent to ship a company of English actors to Canton, Ching should not be invited by the patrons of the British drama to preside in a London theatre.

THE EPITAPH OF SIR HUGH EVANS.

“THERE’S pippins and cheese to come !”

Such are the hopeful words of an old divine—of one Sir Hugh Evans—a preacher distinguished in the latter part of the reign of Henry the Fourth, not so much for the ascetic asperity of his speech and bearing as for a certain household wisdom that ran like threads of gold through his most familiar sentences, enhanced and recommended by a blithe look and a chirping voice ; all of which excellent gifts made him the oracle and friend of the yeomen and goodwives of Windsor. These inestimable qualities—to say nothing of his miraculous hand at bowls, and his marvellous sagacity as a brewer of sack—had, as we have already inferred, endeared him to his flock : and, living, and preaching, and gossiping in a neighbourhood of love and good fellowship, the parson grew old, his cheek mellowing to the last ; when, in the year ——, he fell, like an over-ripe plum from the tree, into his grave—all the singing men and maids and little children of mournful Windsor following their teacher to his couch of earth, and chanting around it the hymn best loved by him when living.

In sooth, the funeral of the poor knight was most bravely attended. Six stout morrice men carried the corpse from a cottage, the property of the burly, roystering Host of the “Garter”—a pretty rustic nook, near Datchet Meads, whither the worn-out parson had, for six months before his death, retired from the stir and bustle of Windsor,—and where, on a summer evening, he might be seen seated in the porch,

patiently hearing little John Fenton lisp his Berkshire Latin,—the said John being the youngest grandson of old Master Page, and godchild of the grey-headed, big-bellied landlord of the “Garter.” Poor Sir Hugh had long been afflicted with a vexing asthma; and, though in his gayer times he would still brew sack for younger revellers, telling them rare tales of “poor dear Sir John and the Prince,” he had, for seven years before his death, eschewed his former sports, and was never known to hear of a match of bowls that he did not shake his head and sigh,—and then, like a stout-hearted Christian as he was, soothe his discomfited spirit with the snatch of an old song. Doctor Caius had, on his death-bed, bequeathed to Sir Hugh an inestimable treasure; nothing less than a prescription—a very charm—to take away a winter cough: for three years had it been to Sir Hugh as the best gift of King Oberon; but the fourth winter the amulet cast its virtue, and from year to year the parson grew worse and worse,—when, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, on a bright May morning, in the arms of his gossip and friend, staid, sober Master Slender, with the Host of the “Garter” seated (for he was too fat to stand) in an arm-chair at the bedside, and Master Page and Master Ford at the foot, Sir Hugh Evans, knight and priest, passed into death, as into a sweet, sound sleep. His wits had wandered somewhat during the night,—for he talked of “Herne the hunter” and “a boy in white”; and then he tried to chirrup a song,—and Masters Page and Ford smiled sadly in each other’s face as the dying man, chuckling as he carolled, trolled forth—

“Pinch him, and burn him, and turn him about,
Till candles, and starlight, and moonshine be out.”

As the day advanced, the dying man became more calm; and at length, conscious of his state, he passed away at

half-past nine in the morning, with a look of serenest happiness—and “God be with you!” were the last words that fluttered from his lips.

The personal property of the dead parson was shared among his friends and servants. Master Slender inherited his “Book of Songs and Posies;” the Host of the “Garter” the sword with which Sir Hugh had dared Doctor Caius to mortal combat; and all his wardrobe, consisting of two entire suits and four shirts, somewhat softened the grief of Francis Simple—son of Simple, former retainer of Master Slender, and for three years body-servant of dead Sir Hugh. A sum of two shillings and fourpence, discovered among the effects of the deceased, was faithfully distributed to the parish poor.

There was sadness in Windsor streets as the funeral procession moved slowly towards the church. Old men and women talked of the frolics of Sir Hugh; and though they said he had been in his day something of the merriest for a parson, yet more than one gossip declared it to be her belief that “worse men had been made bishops.” A long train of friends and old acquaintance followed the body. First, came worthy Master Slender—chief mourner. He was a bachelor, a little past his prime of life, with a sad and sober brow, and a belly inclining to portliness. The severe censors of Windsor had called him woman-hater, for that in his songs and in his speech he would bear too hardly on the frailties and fickleness of the delicate sex; for which unjust severity older people might perchance, and they would, have found some small apology. For, in truth, Master Slender was a man of softest heart; and though he studiously avoided the company of women, he was the friend of all the children of Datchet and Windsor. He always carried apples in his pocket for little John Fenton, youngest child of Anne Fenton, formerly Anne Page; and was once found sitting

in Windsor Park, with little John upon his knees,—Master Slender crying like a chidden maid. Of this enough. Let it now suffice to say that Master Slender—for the Host was too heavy to walk—was chief mourner. Then followed Ford and his wife ; next, Mr. Page and his son William,—poor Mrs. Page being dead two years at Christmas, from a cold caught with over dancing, and then obstinately walking through the snow from her old gossip Ford's. Next in the procession were Master Fenton and his wife, and then followed their eight children in couples ; then Robin—now a prosperous vintner, once page to Sir John,—with Francis Simple ; and then a score of little ones, to whom the poor dead parson would give teaching in reading and writing,—and, where he marked an after wit among his free disciples, something of the Latin accidence. These were all that followed Sir Hugh Evans to his rest—for death had thinned the thick file of his old acquaintance. One was wanting, who would have added weight and dignity to the ceremony—who, had he not some few years before been called to fill the widest grave that was ever dug for flesh, would have cast from his broad and valiant face a lustrous sorrow on the manes of the dead churchman,—who would have wept tears, rich as wine, upon the coffin of his old friend ; for to him, in the convenient greatness of his heart, all men, from the prince of the blood to the nimming knave who stole the “handle of Mrs. Bridget's fan,” were, by turns, friends and good fellows ; who, at the supper at the “Garter” (for the Host gave a solemn feast in celebration of the mournful event), would have moralised on death and mortal accidents, and, between his tankards, talked fine philosophy—true divinity ; would have caroused to the memory of the dead in the most religious spirit of sack, and have sent round whole flagons of surest consolation.

Alas ! this great, this seeming invincible spirit, this mighty wit, with jests all but rich enough to laugh Death from his purpose—to put him civilly aside with a quip, bidding him to pass on and strike at leaner bosoms,—he himself, though with “three fingers on the ribs,” had been hit ; and he, who seemed made to live for ever, an embodied principle of fleshly enjoyment,—he, the great Sir John—

“He was dead and nailed in his chest.”

Others, too, passed away with their great dominator, were wanting at the ceremonial. Where was he, with nose enshrining jests richer to us than rubies ? Truly liberal, yet most unfortunate spirit, hapless Bardolph ; where, when Sir Hugh was laid upon the lap of his mother earth, oh ! where wert thou ? Where was that glorious feature that, had the burying been at the dead time of night, would have outshone the torches ? Where was that all-rich—all-lovely nose ? Alack ! it may be in the maws of French falcons ; its luckless owner throttled on the plains of Agincourt for almost the smallest theft ; hung up by fellest order of the Fifth Henry—of his old boon companion, his brother robber on the field of Gadshill. And could Harry march from the plain with laurel on his brow and leave the comrade of his youth—his fellow-footpad—with neck mortally cut “with edge of penny cord ?” Should such a chaplet have been intertwined with such hemp ? The death of Bardolph is a blot—a foul, foul blot on the ‘scutcheon of Agincourt. But let us pass the ingratitude and tyranny of kings, to dwell wholly upon the burial of Sir Hugh.

Who shall say that all the spirits with whom the parson was wont to recreate himself,—to counsel, to quarrel,—who shall say that they did not all mingle in the procession, all once again pass through the streets of ancient Windsor ? The broad shadow of Sir John, arm-in arm with the spirit

of Mrs. Page,—Bardolph and Nym, descended from their gibbets, new from the plains of France, to make melancholy holiday in Berkshire,—learned Dr. Caius, babbling Quickly, and Pistol, her broken, war-worn husband, kicked down the tavern stairs, where in his old days he served as drawer, and was killed,—and Shallow, immortal Shallow, his lean ghost fluttering with a sense of office,—who shall say that all these did not crowd about the coffin of good Sir Hugh, and, as he was laid in the grave, give him a smiling welcome to his everlasting habitation? Let us not, in this day of light, be charged with superstition, if in these pages—perpetual as adamant—we register our belief, a belief mingling in our very blood, that all these illustrious ghosts followed, and, with their dim majesty, ennobled the procession,—albeit, to the eyes of the uninitiate, none but the living did service to the dead.

Sir Hugh Evans was laid by the side of his old friend and old antagonist. Doctor Caius; and, for many years, there was a story among the good wives of Windsor, that the fairies, once a year, danced round the grave of Sir Hugh, the turf upon it growing as bright as emeralds; and, in a hawthorn bush, but a few paces from the spot, “melodious birds” did, at certain seasons, “sing madrigals.”

We have now to speak of the epitaph of the good Sir Hugh. More than four hundred years have passed away since the mortal part of that most worthy piece of Welsh divinity was consigned to dust. It may be a lesson to ambition to learn that the exact spot where he was buried cannot, at the present time, be verified: the ablest antiquarians are at odds about it. Proud, however,—and, we trust, not unbecomingly so,—are we to be the means of publishing to the world the epitaph of Sir Hugh, copied from his tombstone, in the possession of a gentleman in Berkshire, who has resisted our most earnest supplications

that he would suffer us to make known his name. This favour he has resolutely refused ; but has, in the most handsome manner, presented us with the use of the tombstone, together with a most voluminous, and no less satisfactory, account of its genuineness. Happy should we have been could we have found room for the history of the relic at full. Leaving it, however, for the archives of the Antiquarian Society, we must content ourselves with stating that the document fully proves that the tombstone was erected from the private munificence of Master Slender, and that the pithy and most touching epitaph inscribed upon it was selected by his happy taste, as combining all the excellencies of an epitaph in the fewest words—these words having the further recommendation of being uttered, on a memorable occasion, by the deceased himself. The words were repeated to Master Slender by his servant Simple, despatched, on a certain day, by Sir Hugh with a letter touching the wooing of Anne Page. After long pondering, reviewing every circumstance of his ancient friendship with the dead Sir Hugh,—seated, one sunny afternoon, on the bench outside the “Garter,” the words came jump again into the mind of Slender ; and quickly raising and emptying his tankard, he marched, like a man resolved, to the stone-cutter, and—for he cared not for Latin—bade the workman cut on the stone—(the inscription, considering its age, is in a wonderful state of preservation)—the words that follow :—

HUGH EVANS

Prieste

Dyed atte Datchette

May—anno Domi 14—

Aged—

“There’s Pippins and Cheese—to Come.”

How simply, yet how beautifully, does this epitaph shadow forth the fruitfulness of the future ! How delicate, and yet how sufficing, its note of promise !—

“THERE’S PIPPINS AND CHEESE—TO COME.”

Pippins ! Does not the word, upon a tombstone, conjure up thoughts of Hesperian gardens—of immortal trees, laden with golden fruit ; with delicious produce, the growth of a soil where not one useless weed takes root, where no lane-ful snake rustles among the grass, where no blight descends, no canker withers ? Where we may pluck from the consenting boughs, and eat, and eat—and never, as in earthly things, find a worm at the core, a rottenness at the heart, where outside beauty tempted us to taste ? “*There’s pippins to come !*” The evil and misery gathered with the apple of death will be destroyed—forgotten—by the ambrosial fruit to be plucked for ever in immortal orchards !—

“THERE’S PIPPINS AND CHEESE—TO COME !”

What a picture of plenty in its most beneficent aspect—what a prospect of pastoral abundance !

Think of it, ye oppressed of the earth ! Ye, who are bowed and pinched by want—ye, who are scourged by the hands of persecution—ye, crushed with misery—ye, doomed to the bitterness of broken faith ; take this consolation to your wearied souls—apply this balsam to your bruised hearts.—Though all earth be to you as barren as the sands—

“THERE’S PIPPINS AND CHEESE—TO COME !”

THE GREENWICH PENSIONER.

A GREENWICH pensioner! Did any of my readers ever ponder on that strange composition of battered humanity and blue serge? Did they never feel a something approaching very near gratitude on passing, in the metropolis, a Greenwich pensioner, who, with his honest, carved out, unabashed front, looks as bluntly and as wonderingly at the bustle and splendour around him as does an unsophisticated wether suddenly removed from South Downs to Cheapside, whilst shaking his woollen coat beneath the whip of the coachman to the Lord Mayor. What a mixture of gravity and wonderment is in the poor brute's countenance! how with its meek, uplifted head it stares at the effulgent vehicle,—runs leaping at the coach-wheels, mistaking them for hurdles,—falls, awe-struck, back, at the gilt and beavered greatness of the footman's cocked hat,—then, suddenly awakened from its amazement by the lurcher's teeth, or the driver's stick, makes an unlucky spring of some three feet into the air, catches a glance of its figure in the mirrored walls of a silk mercer, and, startled at the sight, dashes through the first court,—carrying perhaps a few yards upon its back some red-faced, nankeen-gaitered little stockbroker, whose spattered small clothes are for a time unregarded in the mighty rush of drovers, butchers, dogs, and idlers.

Now such is the real Greenwich pensioner. When I say

real, I mean one who abhors London worse than he does a Frenchman; who thinks there is nothing to be seen in it, unless, indeed, it be Nelson's tomb, in St. Paul's, or the "Ship" public-house, in Tooley Street. London is to him a never-failing source of merriment; that is, whilst he is out of it. He sits at Greenwich, and looking as sagely as a starling ere he snaps at a fly, at the piled-up clouds of smoke hanging over the metropolis, or, indeed, almost propped upon its chimney-pots, and, stretching forth his stick, significantly points them out to his former shipmates, asking them if they do not think "there is something dark over there—something of an 'ox-eye' to the west?" He, indeed, never ventures to London, unless it be for a fresh supply of tobacco, or to pay a quarterly visit to his granddaughter, the upper housemaid in a gentleman's family,—and who, indeed, thinks with horror upon his call, because the neighbours laugh at the cocked hat and the shoe-buckles of her relative; but principally because Richard, the baker's young man, declares he hates all sailors. The visit is never a very lengthened one, especially if the girl lives far to the west; for her grandfather has to call upon Will Somebody, who set up, with his prize-money, a public-house in Wapping. So off he starts, hurries up the Strand, touches his hat from a point of principle as he nears Somerset House; puts out more canvas, and away for Temple Bar. The pensioner has not yet, however, sat for his picture.

We have all read of crabs being despoiled of their claws, locusts of their entrails, and turtles of their brains, receiving in lieu thereof a pellet of cotton, and yet retaining life, and appearing, in the words of the experimentalising and soft-hearted naturalist, "very lively and comfortable."¹ Now,

¹ See *Vaillant* and *Redi*.

the real Greenwich pensioner distances all these; he is, indeed, an enigma: nature knows not what to make of him. He hath been suspended, like a school-boy's bob-cherry, a hundred times over the chaps of death, and yet still been snatched away by the hand of Providence—to whom, indeed, his many hurts and dangers have especially endeared him. Ye of the “*land* interest,” ye soft-faced young sparks, who think with terror upon a razor on a frosty morning,—ye suffering old gentlemen, who pause at a linen-draper's, and pass the flannel between your fingers, as time verges towards October—ye martyrs to a winter cough, ye racked with a quarterly toothache—all ye of household ailings, look upon this hacked, shivered piece of clay, this Greenwich pensioner:—consider of how many of his powers he is despoiled—see where the cutlass and the boarding-spike have ploughed up and pierced his flesh; see where the bullet has glanced, singeing by: and when you have reckoned up—if they are to be reckoned—his many scars, above all, look at his hard, contented, weather-barnacled face, and then, gentle spectators, complain of your rheums, your joint-twitchings, and your corns!

Why, this Greenwich pensioner is in himself a record of the last forty years' war. He is a breathing volume of naval history: not an event but is somewhere indented in him with steel or lead: he has been the stick in which the English Mars has notched his cricket matches, when twenty-four pounders were balls, and mainmasts wickets. See, in his blinded eye is Howe's victory on the glorious First of June; that stump of what was once an arm is Nile; and in his wooden leg read Trafalgar. As to his scars, a gallant action, or a desperate cutting out is noted in every one of them. And what was the old fellow's only wish, as with a shattered knee he lay in the cock-pit under the

surgeon's hand—what was his earnest supplication to the wet-eyed messmate who bore him down the hatchway? Simply that he would save him one of the splinters of the mainmast of the *Victory*, to make of it a leg for Sundays! His wish was granted; and at Greenwich, always on the seventh day, and also on the 21st of October, is he to be seen, propped upon the inestimable splinter, which from labour, time, and beeswax, has taken the dark glossiness of mahogany. What a face he has! What a certain consciousness of his superiority on his own element at times puffs out his lip, and gives a sudden twitch to his head! But ask him in what quarter sets the wind—and note, how with his one eye he will glance at you from top to toe; and, without ever raising his head or hand to make a self-inquiry, answers you at once, as though it was a question he was already prepared for! And so, indeed, he is; it being his first business, on rising, to consult the weather. The only way to gain his entire confidence, is at once frankly to avow your utter ignorance, and his superiority; and then, after he has leered at you with an eye in which there is a meeting of contempt, good-humour, and self-importance, he is wholly your own; and will straightway launch into the South Seas, coast along the shores of Guinea,—where, by-the-bye, he will tell you he once fell in love with a negress, who, however, jilted him for the cook—and then he will launch out about Admiral Duncan—take you a voyage with him round Cape Horn, where a mermaid appeared, and sang a song to the ship's crew; and who, indeed, blew aside all the musket shots that were ungallantly fired at her in requital of her melody. But our pensioner has one particular story; hear him through that, suffer yourself to be wholly astounded at its recital, and, if you were not a landsman, he would instantly greet you as his dearest friend. The heroes of

this same story are, our pensioner and a shark: a tremendous shark that used to be the terror of the harbour of St. Thomas's. Upon this shark, and the piece of the mainmast of the *Victory*, is our pensioner content to rest all his importance during his life, and his fame with posterity. He will tell you that he, being caterer of the mess, let fall a piece of beef out at the port-hole, which this terrible shark received into its jaws, and twisted its body most provokingly at the delicious mouthful. Hereupon our pensioner—it was before, he reminds you, he had lost a limb—asks leave of the first lieutenant (for the captain was ashore) to have a bout with the shark: leave being granted, all the crew are quickly in the shrouds, and upon the hammock netting, to see Tom “tackle the shark.” Our pensioner now enters into a minute detail of how, having armed himself with a long knife, he jumped overboard, dived under the shark, whom he saw approaching with distended jaws, and inflicted a tremendous wound with the knife in the belly of the fish; this is repeated thrice, when the shark turns itself upon its back—a boat is let down, and both the conqueror and the conquered are quickly received upon deck. You are doubtless astonished at this; he, however, adds to your surprise by telling you that the mess regaled off the piece of beef recovered from the fish; be more astounded at this, although mingle no doubt in your astonishment, and he will straightway promise some day to treat your eyes with a sight of a set of chequer men, cut from the very dorsal bone of the immolated shark! To be the hearer of a sailor's tale, is something like undergoing the ancient ordeal of red-hot ploughshares; be innocent of unbelief, and you may, as was held, journey in safety; doubt the smallest point, and you are quickly withered into nought.

What an odd contrast to his early life is the state of a

Greenwich pensioner ! It is as though a part of the angry and foaming sea should lie stagnant in a bathing tub. All his business is to recount his former adventures—to plod about, and look with a disdainful eye at trees and bricks and mortar ; or, when he would indulge in a serious fit of spleen, to walk down to the river's side, and let his gall feed upon the mishaps of London apprentices, who, fearless of consequences, may have ventured some five miles from home in *not* a “trim-built wherry.” A Greenwich pensioner fresh from sea is a most preposterous creature ; he gets up every morning for a week, a month, and still finds himself in the same place ; he knows not what to make of it—he feels the strangeness of his situation, and would, had he the patience and the wit, liken himself to a hundred unsettled things. Compare him to a hippopotamus in a gentleman's park, and he would tell you he had in his day seen a hippopotamus, and then, with a good-natured grunt, acquiesce in the resemblance ; or to a jolly-boat in a flower garden ; or to a sea-gull in the cage of a canary ; or to a porpoise upon a hearthrug ; or to a boatswain's whistle in a nursery ; or to a marling-spike in a milliner's workroom ; or a tar-barrel in a confectioner's ; with any one or all of these misplaced articles would our unsettled pensioner sympathise, until time shall have reconciled him to his asylum ; and even then his fancy, like the shells upon our mantelpiece, will sound of the distant and the dangerous ocean. At Greenwich, however, the mutilated old sailor has time enough to indulge in the recollection of his early days, and, with what wisdom he may, to make up his mind to meet in another world those whom his arm may have sent thither long before. Death, at length, gently lays the veteran upon his back—his last words, as the sailor puts his withered hand upon his heart, are “All's well,” and sea and earth

have passed away. His body, which had been for forty years a bulwark to the land, now demands of it but "two paces of the vilest earth;" and if aught could spring from the tomb characteristic of its inmate, from the grave of the pensioner would arise the stout, unbending oak—it would be his fitting monument; and the carolling of the birds in its branches would be his loud, his artless epitaph.

The Greenwich pensioner, wherever we meet with him, is a fine, quaint memento of our national greatness, and our fortunate locality. We should look upon him as the representative of Neptune, and bend our spirit towards him accordingly. But that is not sufficient; we have individual acknowledgments to make to him for the comforts of a long safety. Let us but consider, as we look at his wooden supporter, that if it had not been for his leg the cannon-ball might have scattered us in our tea parlour—the bullet which deprived him of his orb of vision might have stricken *Our Village* from our hand whilst ensconced in our study; the cutlass which cleaved his shoulder might have demolished our china vase, or our globe of golden fish:—instead of which, hemmed round by such walls of stout and honest flesh, we have lived securely, participating in every peaceful and domestic comfort, and neither heard the roar of the cannon nor seen its smoke. Shakespeare has compared England to "a swan's nest" in the "world's pool": let us be nautical in our similes, and liken her to a single lemon kernel in a huge bowl of punch: who is it that has prevented the kernel from being ladled down the throat of despotism, from becoming but an atom of the great, loathsome mass?—our Greenwich pensioner. Who has kept our houses from being transformed into barracks and our cabbage markets into parades?—again, and again, let it be answered, the Greenwich pensioner. Reader, if the next time you see the tar,

you should perchance have with you your wife and smiling family, think that if their tenderness has never been shocked by scenes of blood and terror, you owe such quietude to a Greenwich pensioner. Indeed, I know not if a triennial progress of the Greenwich establishment through the whole kingdom would not be attended with the most beneficial effects—fathers would teach their little ones to lisp thanksgivings unto God that they were born in England, as reminded of their happy superiority by the withered form of every Greenwich pensioner.

THE DRILL SERGEANT.

SHALL we view our subject through the glasses of philosophy? Precious microscopic glasses, by which we look into the exquisite order of a bee's weapon, which shames the ruggedness of that vaunted wonder of man's hands—a Whitechapel needle. By which the superfine coat of the unworthy appears but as a vile complication of coarse hemp-strings; by which we look into the heart that to the naked eye displays a tenanted cherub, with voice of music and wings of light, but find a weak-eyed little monster, with squeak of mouse and pinions of leather. O, glorious spectacles! which show palaces not entirely as resting-places for divinities—many laurels as nettles, stinging what they are fancied to adorn—Fame's trumpet, a penny whistle blown by Asthma—the awful person of Ceremony, a Merry-Andrew stricken grave—a grand review-day, a game at ninepins on an extensive scale—a levee, a triumph of the laceman and jeweller—a court ode, a verbose receipt for wages—"honourable gentleman," convicted scoundrel—"learned friend," stupid opponent—a prison, a temporary retirement from noise—a glass of spring water, a "cup of sack"—an ugly face, God's own handiwork—a handsome one, nothing more—noble blood, of the same hue as a carter's—a black parish coffin, a couch of crystal—a grave, a place of rest—consecrated earth, the whole globe—a tombstone, work for the mason—a pompous epitaph, the

toil of a liar ! This transformation—or rather, this showing of reality—is the result of using the glasses of philosophy. Without the common microscope we could not know how certain insects respired, whether at the mouth or shoulders ; wanting philosophy's optic, we should be in like ignorance of the source of being in some men—for all exist not by the same laws. To the naked eye, indeed, there appears no difference ; but to the spectacled orb of philosophy it is shown that many men respire, not by inward organisation, but by external and adventitious instruments. Let those who are sceptical on this position consider for a moment the bearing of a thorough-paced coxcomb : does he breathe from his lungs ? No ; but from his habiliments. His coat, cravat, boots—yea, his spurs, are the sources of his being, his dignity, his action. Nay, some men take all their life from a riband at their button-hole, or a garter at their leg.—Our Drill Sergeant takes it from his rattan.

I know that much of this may be deemed foreign to the purpose. To those who so conclude, I say—A common wire-dancer gives not his grand feat without many little nick-nack preparations. When we visit the Egyptian Hall, that grand emporium of monsters, we do not step from the pavement into the show-room, but are wisely made to thread two or three passages for the better excitation of our feelings. And shall my Drill Sergeant have not the common observance paid to a mermaid ? I trust I have more respect for my subject, and the army in general. If any one of my readers, when he glanced at the title, thought to meet with the Sergeant standing bolt upright at the beginning of the line, like the sentinel at Buckingham Gate, I luxuriate in his disappointment.

To be candid : I had laid down no form for my beginning ; so I thought a caper or two upon philosophy would

not be amiss, trusting eventually to drop upon my subject. This is a trick frequently played by —. However, to business.

We must contemplate the Drill Sergeant at a distance : there is no closing with him. A painter would decline a chair in the tiger's den, asserting that he could take the animal's stripes equally well through the bars. Even so will I take the stripes of our Sergeant. First, to consider his appearance, or rather the discipline by which his "thaws and muscles" deport themselves. He has a vile, cat-like leer of the eye, that makes us retreat back a few paces, and rub our palms, to be assured the knave has not secretly placed in one of them a shilling. We tremble, and for once are afraid to meet the king's countenance—(I am adding to the awful attributes of the Drill Sergeant the fearful privilege of recruiting). We shrink, lest he has mentally approved of us as being worthy of ball cartridge. He glances towards our leg, and we cannot but feel that he is thinking how it would look in a black gaiter. At this moment we take courage, and, valiantly lifting off our hat, pass our luxuriant curls through our four fingers—we are petrified ; for we see by his chuckle that he has already doomed our tresses to the scissors of the barrack-barber. We are at once about to take to our legs, when, turning round, we see something under a middle-sized man looking over our head. On this we feel our safety, and triumph in the glory of five feet one. Something must always be allowed for weakness—something for vanity ; which, indeed, philosophers denominate the greatest weakness. Hence all these cogitations, foolishly attributed by the little individual to the Sergeant, arise from the civil man's self-conceit ; the Sergeant always treating with ineffable contempt persons of a certain size. And here may be remarked the astonishing capacity of our

Sergeant in judging of human altitude. Ere George Bidder can enumerate the virtues of King Ferdinand, our Sergeant will sum up the exact height of a man, duly allowing for his pumps and silk stockings. Strive to mystify the question, and the ability of the Sergeant mocks the endeavour; for he will, on a minute's notice, resolve how many feet of martial flesh are in a complete square, after including the triangle, fife, and drummer lads, and deducting some of the boy officers. Thus, five-feet-eight reader, if thou wouldst enjoy the pranks of the Sergeant, unmolested by his eye, teach thy leg to mimic lameness: or, if easier, cough consumptively.

I would wish to convey a striking resemblance of our Drill Sergeant on duty, when you would swear by his gait that this glorious earth was wholly composed of spring wires, so elastic are his soles. It is a motion unparalleled either in the natural or artificial world; it is a movement by itself—like the swoop of the eagle, the waddle of the duck, the fleetness of the greyhound, or the hop of the frog. And yet, on intense consideration, I think I have seen something approximating to the bearing of our Drill Sergeant. What think you of the manner of a pug dog in a dropsy, exposed for air on a nipping December morning, his black nose turning almost white with indignation at the coldness of the flags?—There certainly is a resemblance; there is dignity in both animals, albeit to the daring eye of a grotesque character. It must, however, be owned, that on great occasions our Sergeant can alter his deportment. It is not in the nature of things to be always strained to the highest: the distended skin of the serpent at times falls into amiable and social wrinkles; an arrant shrew may sometimes be caught singing "*Sweet Home!*" the bow-string of a William Tell may be doubtless as relaxed

and tuneless as the instrument of a Haymarket fiddler ;—and shall not our Sergeant unbend ? He does break himself up from the stiffness of parade ; for see him when the draughts of mine hostess hath diluted some portion of military starch, and he no longer holds his head like a game-cock, taking his morning's potation ; see him then, and own that even a Sergeant may be amiable. Is he not the very model of elegant ease ? He is, indeed, unbent ; for his limbs swing loosely as hung ramrods. Our Sergeant can now talk ; his tongue hath overleapt the two barriers, “Attention !” and “Stand at ease !” and rambles wildly from Egypt to Waterloo. And if it should happen that the pretty barmaid be niece to the landlady, mark how the Sergeant probes for her feelings with charged bayonets—how he will try to smite her gentle ear with a discharge of artillery—swear that he hath had twenty wounds under his coat, although very politically adding that they have left him not a bit the worse man. Then, if the damsel still continue untouched, taking orders with a calm air, our Sergeant hints in a whisper, audible to the dozing watchman at the door, something about a Spanish widow at Saragossa ; adding very loudly, “But no—I was always for true love !” adorning the beautiful edifice of principle with a flowery oath. He then begins a sentiment, and, at a loss, dives for the conclusion to it in a pot of ale. If there happen to be four or five privates in the room, our Sergeant increases in importance from the circumstance—just as a cat becomes great from the introduction of a litter of puppies. Our Sergeant is more than ever the leading gander of the flock—the king-herring of the shoal—the blue-bottle of the swarm—the pebble of the sand—the G of the gamut. He has now additional hearers of the tales of his prowess, and, if he but give the wink, companions

who saw him face the breach and spike the cannon. His rank next becomes the subject of discussion ; and looking very complacently at his arm, he tells of some dreadful exploit in which he earned his stripes. "And doubtless, Sergeant, not before you deserved them," ventures a small, quiet wight in the corner, who will have his fling, though at the expense of his liquor ; for ere he concludes his remark he gives the Sergeant his glass—just as a schoolboy, who twitches the trunk of an elephant, throws to the animal a peace-offering of apples—whilst the privates inwardly laugh at the joke, and get rebuked for again enjoying it on parade to-morrow morning. Just as the Sergeant's opponents are nearly all slaughtered, a little Italian boy, bearing a tortoise, adroitly glides into the room to display the testaceous wonder ; or he has with him a bust of Napoleon, at which our Sergeant bristles up, looking, indeed, seriously fierce at plaster of Paris. Here he utters some half-audible wish that he had not received a bullet in the last charge, and then—— Now, however, our Sergeant takes an opportunity to pour forth his learning—he mangles five words of French ; the Italian shakes his head, and holds forth his hand ; the Sergeant swears at him for an impostor, ignorant of his own language. It drawing late, our Sergeant calls for his reckoning, and, learning the amount, with an affected air of destitution avows he has no money ; he has not a piece of silver about him, unless it be that at his breast—and here he carelessly lifts up with one finger a Waterloo medal ;—then he draws out a watch, once the property of a French general slain by our Sergeant, and asks if that will serve for the amount ? At length, however, the money being shaken from a yellow silk purse, our Sergeant, after a salutary admonition to the privates, goes off, as he says, to visit a friend in the Ordnance.

Now this is the utmost stretch of our Sergeant's amiability ; and he departs with a consciousness of having made himself remarkably agreeable, at the same time that he has maintained the proper dignity of the army. To-morrow he is stiff and stately again, performing his old duty of setting up in due order men for the sport of War, that fearful skittle-player. And, indeed, how great must be the satisfaction of the Drill Sergeant when he thinks that, by his kindly solicitude, his Majesty's subjects will "die with decency" and "in close order." Soothing reflection !

We may liken a Recruiting Sergeant to a sturdy woodman—a Drill Sergeant to a carpenter. Let us take a dozen vigorous young elms, with the same number of bluff-cheeked, straddling rustics. How picturesque and inviting do the green waving elms appear ! Whilst we look at them our love and admiration of the natural so wholly possess us that we cannot for a moment bring ourselves to imagine the most beautiful offspring of teeming earth cut up into boot-jacks or broom-handles : in the very idea there is sacrilege to the sylvan deities. The woodman, however, lays the axe to the elms (the forest groans at the slaughter) ; the carpenter comes up with his basket of tools across his shoulder ; and at a Christmas dinner we may by chance admire the extraordinary polish of our eating knife, little thinking it owes its lustre to the elm which shadowed us at midsummer. Now for our rustics. We meet them in green lanes, striding like young ogres—carelessness in their very hat-buckle—a scorn of ceremony in the significant tuck-up of their smock-frock. The Recruiting Sergeant spirits them away from fields to which they were the chief adornment, and the Drill Sergeant begins his labour.

And now, reader, behold some martial carpentry and joinery. Our Drill Sergeant hath but few implements : as

eye, voice, hand, leg, rattan. These few tools serve him for every purpose, and with them he brings down a human carcass, though at first as unwieldy as a bull, to the slimness and elegance of the roe. There are the dozen misshapen logs before him; the foliage of their heads gone with the elm leaves, as also their bark—their “rough pash,”—the frocks and wide breeches.

Mercy on us! there was a stroke of handiwork! the Sergeant with but one word has driven a wedge into the very breast of that pale-looking youngster, whose eyelid shakes as though it would dam up a tear! Perhaps the poor wretch is now thinking of yellow corn and harvest home. Another skilful touch, and the Sergeant hath fairly chiselled away some inches of the shoulder of that flaxen-headed tyro: and see how he is rounding off that mottled set of knuckles, whilst the owner redly, but dumbly, sympathises with their sufferings. There is no part left untouched by our Sergeant; he by turns, saws, planes, pierces, and thumps every limb and every joint; applies scouring paper to any little knot or ruggedness, until man, glorious man, the “paragon of animals,” fears no competition in stateliness of march, or glibness of movement, from either peacock or Punch.

The Drill Sergeant hath but little complacency in him; he is a thing to be revered, not doated upon; we fear him and his mysteries; even his good humour startles, for it is at once as blustering and as insignificant as a report of a blank cartridge. Again, I say, the Drill Sergeant is to be approached with awe; smirking flies the majesty of his rattan. He is the despot of joints; and we rub our hands with glee, and our very toes glow again, when we reflect they are not of his dominions.

THE TAPESTRY WEAVER OF BEAUVAIS.

THE oldest people of Beauvais remembered Schatten the tapestry weaver. Some vowed he was threescore, some a hundred years old ; and ever as the subject was touched upon, Schatten would widen his huge mouth, and cry with a low chuckle, "Ay, ay, a thousand—more or less. I shall live to see wrinkles in the sun." None knew from what stock he sprang—from what land he came. Such questions he would ever parry with some extravagance. "I was born of felspar and quartz, and my home was the Hartz Mountains when they were no bigger than mole-hills." And thus Schatten lived on. He saw the child rise into manhood—wed—become a parent—a grey-headed man—a corpse ; and so with the child's child, and yet no change came upon Schatten. He stood, a flinty image gazing on dying generations.

A hovel in an obscure part of Beauvais was the dwelling of the weaver. There was his tapestry loom ; and there, day after day, and night after night, would he work, at times droning a song to cheer what seemed the monotony of an eternal employment. Notwithstanding the inexplicable mystery about the man, he was, on the whole, a favourite with his fellow-townsmen. There was something so meek in his demeanour, so placid, so unassuming, and his speech was so soft and gentle, that although his name had been mingled in strange recitals, he had never been molested,

but, on the contrary, was generally considered a harmless, well-meaning creature ; one who, far from sneering at the pleasures of youth, looked upon them with seeming satisfaction. No one more frequently witnessed the bacchanal revelries of the toppers of Beauvais ; for, though Schatten was no drinker himself, he beheld with unaffected pleasure the loose jollity of others. The like at feasts : although he was temperate as a chameleon, he would most readily carve huge collops for others. He seemed to hold in peculiar admiration a purple, bloated face and swagging paunch, though his own sharp visage was as yellow as saffron, and his figure lank as a thread-paper. This urbanity towards the failings of others was, it will be conceded, the secret of his popularity. Though he himself abstained from all animal indulgence, he not only did not gloomily lecture on the lawlessness of appetite, but, on the contrary, smiled on its achievements. This charity had served many besides old Schatten.

But there was another circumstance that greatly assisted the goodly reputation of the weaver : it was the character of his many visitors and pupils. His hovel was the resort of the loveliest girls—the most beautiful youths, not only of the town of Beauvais, but from the great city itself—from elegant, voluptuous Paris ; for even at the period of which we write it was distinguished for the refinement and luxuries of life.

Schatten, in his capacity of tapestry weaver, had pictures of every variety of subject ; and it was his good fortune that those professors who excelled in the beautiful art seemed by common consent to seek old Schatten, that he might immortalise their radiant sketches in his still more exquisite tapestry. There was no subject which painting could portray, no imagination which it could robe in life and

colour, that was not ready for the loom of Schatten. If a battle were the theme, there might be seen contending heroes, with stern rapture in their faces, glory about their heads—their every limb glowing as with Mars' own fire—their swords like sunbeams, and the smoking blood more like libations to purple Liber, than torrents in which the human life gushed forth. Thus a battle woven by old Schatten was a grand and glorious thing—each combatant was an excited god; whilst the drained and pallid carcass—the dreadful wounds, with jagged and gaping mouths—the rigid muscle straining against death—the fixed and stone-like eye, and clotted hair—all the gross, substantial horrors of systematic slaughter, were thrown into the shade: they were not to expose that common liar—Glory. If the subject were beauty, there might be seen—as erst was chosen by the antique master—one charm from twenty different faces, making a miracle of perfection. All that was voluptuous and entrancing shone in the dewy light of woman's eye; there was an eternal youth in her red lip, a tenderness in her warm cheek: too pure for the earth, too exquisitely fragile, she seemed of a sisterhood 'twixt humanity and angels. The same masterly hand was displayed though the subject was the banquet of the glutton—the supper was still spread “in the Apollo.” The same power shown in the golden heaps of the miser: the food, the wine, seemed ambrosia and nectar, bestowing immortality on the lip that tasted: the gold glittered like something dropped from the skies, to be worn as amulets against calamity.

A man so potent in his handicraft as Schatten might have surrounded himself with all the symbols of wealth; and, had he been ambitious, have successfully contended for the highest honours of citizenship. But, it was plain, he valued gold as ashes; and for the trappings of state and place, the

most regal shows, the pomp and blazonry of kings, were with him matter for a jest.

"Alack!" cried Michel Sous, a withered money-scrivener of Beauvais—"I hear 't was a brave sight; and plague on my shanks! I have missed it. Which way went the procession?" The man of bonds and pieces remained gaping for the answer of the tapestry weaver, who stood, cross-legged, leaning on his staff, with a face immovable as granite. It was a day of triumph, a time of holiday, and Michel had for once quitted his bags and desk to sun himself in the glory of his fellow-townsmen. "Weaver, I say, which way went the procession, and where shall I find it?"

"It went, after some turnings, into the churchyard. Take up a handful of mould, and, in truth, you clutch a part of what you seek."

"Why, thou art drunk, merry, or mad! The churchyard and mould! I ask you where went, where *is*, the procession?"

"Where I tell you. I saw it pass by me, and after some windings and shiftings, I saw each brave puppet—that strutted as though the angels were looking at it—I saw it shrink, and bend, and totter, and the yellowness of age crept over it, and its eye faded, and its hair whitened, and it crawled into the earth as the fox slinks beneath his cover. The trumpets lay dumb and cankering in the soil—the rustling flags dropped tinder at the breeze—the rust-eaten sword crumbled beneath the mattock of the digger, and rank grass grows above the pomp of the last hour."

"Why, Schatten, thou art dreaming. Blessed St. Mary! thou surely didst not see the sight, else thou hadst told me a truer story of its progress."

"Not so: trust me, I saw the revel—but I beheld it from

the pinnacle of time ; and I tell you again, all the men who passed me I watched into the churchyard. Their haughty eyes—their trophies, flags, and clamorous pipes—I say to you, they are dust ! The shout of triumph hath died in the distance, and *hic jacet* is now the only tongue.”

“So, so—a riddle,” crowed the scrivener; and he hobbled on to seek a less perplexing respondent.

Such were, at times, the answers of old Schatten, who, when he pleased, could be as grave and oracular as a father confessor. Such were his reflections on pageants which, to many thoughtless and happy minds, were the symbols of all earthly greatness. It was his pastime to analyse appearance—to unravel the glossy web of policy—to unfold the swathings of vain pomp and ceremony, and point to the foul mummy they encased. Yet would he vary this custom with smiles, and laughter, and witty sayings, which gave a savour to the wine they honoured. He would, with his thin voice, troll a song in praise of beauty, and, with quick conceits, prick on lusty youth to deeds of jollity and wild adventure; nay, he would often mingle in the revelry. Many a time have the townsfolk of Beauvais laughed at the gambols of old Schatten, who, pranked in his best, would trip it with some blue-eyed fair one, who, seemingly unconscious of the deformity of her partner, would glide through the dance all smiles and sweetness, as though mortal youth were wedded to immortality, and wrinkles and grey hairs were not the inheritance of the children of earth. Alas ! but a few months, or weeks, and the poor maiden—she who seemed the embodied principle of beauty and motion—was as the “clods of the valley,” a mass of blank insensibility.

Various were the ways by which old Schatten had insinuated himself into the good graces of the people of Beauvais. To please them he would, when in the humour,

act twenty different parts—now he would be a learned doctor, and now a mountebank; at times he would utter the wisdom of sages—at times play a hundred antic tricks, making his audience shout with merriment. For one long winter did Schatten profoundly lecture upon laurels, crowns, swords, and money-bags; and, like a skilful chemist, would he analyse their component parts.

“This,” cried Schatten, producing a semblance of the wreath, “this is the laurel crown of one of the Cæsars. How fresh and green the leaves remain! Ha! there is no such preservative as innocent blood—it embalms the names of mighty potentates, who else had never been heard of: steeped in it, deformity becomes loveliness—fame colours her most lasting pictures with its paint! The fields that grew this branch were richly manured: tens of thousands of hearts lay rotting there; the light of thousands of eyes was quenched; palaces and hovels, in undistinguished heaps, were strewn about the soil; there lay the hoary and the unborn; the murdered wife and the outraged virgin—and showers of tears falling on this garden of agony and horror, it was miraculously fertile—for lo! it gave forth this one branch, to deck the forehead of one man! In the veins that seam its leaves are the heart-strings of murdered nations; it is the plant of fire and blood, reaped by the sword!—Such is the conqueror’s laurel.

“And here is the despot’s diadem!—Many a time, like glowing iron, hath it seared the brows it circled. Of what is it composed? What wonderful ingredients meet in this quintessence of worldly wealth? See, the passions and the feelings that helped to make it still haunt their handiwork. Their shadows live in its glittering metal and its flashing gems. Full-blooded power, with a demon’s eye, glares from this ruby—leprous fear trembles in these pearls—in

every diamond, care or compunction weeps a tear! Throughout the gold I see a thousand forms, dawning and fading like hues in heated steel:—there, fancy detects the assassin with his knife;—there, the bondsman snaps his chain;—there, is the headsman;—there, the civil war! These are the shades that haunt the despot's crown; that wear him waking, and screech to him in his sleep. A nation's groan is pent up in its round. It is a living thing that eats into the brain of the possessor, making him mad and drunk for blood and power!

“The miser's money-bag!—Another monster—all throat. Could its owner have put the sun itself within this bag, the world for him had been in darkness—perpetual night had cast a pall upon creation—the fruits of earth had withered in the bud, and want and misery been universal; whilst he, the thrifty villain! smugly lived in bloom, and in his very baseness found felicity! And yet, what was the worth of all this bag contained? Though it was stuffed with wealth, it was hung about with fears. As its owner slid his palm into the heap, he would start as though he felt the hand of death were hidden there to grasp him. He was almost blind within a world of beauty. His eye saw no images save those painted by gold; his ears heard not, save when the metal tinkled; his tongue was dumb, if it spoke not of wealth; the glittering pieces were to him the children of his heart and soul—dull offspring of the foulest appetites; yet he hugged them to his bosom—he hugged them, and in his dying hour they turned to snakes, and stung him in the embrace! This is the miser's money-bag—the abode of reptiles, the sepulchre of the soul!

“The sword!—Ceremony sanctifies it. Some kingly words are spoken—a trumpet is blown; straightway the sword is *ennobled*!

“The lawyer’s gown!—the masquerading dress of common sense. There is a living instinct in its web: let golden villainy come under it, and with a thought it flows and spreads, and gives an ample shelter to the thing it covers; let poor knavery seek it, and it shrinks and curtains up, and leaves the trembling victim naked to the court!”

Thus, in his graver moments, would old Schatten preach to his hearers; then, with a thought, he would break from the solemn discourse, and make merriment with the self-same objects. Thus, like a skilful juggler, he would hold the conqueror’s laurel, that hardy plant, to his lips, and with a puff blow it into dust; he would change the tiara into a huge snake, monstrous and ugly, and make the beholders start at its contortions. The long purse he would ravel into a shroud; he would melt the sword into drops of blood, and turn the lawyer’s gown into a net of steel. Whilst these tricks made him a favourite with the young and gay, his learning, and the thousand stories he had of men of all ages and of all ranks, rendered him an oracle of wisdom to the studious. It was observed that Schatten, whilst narrating any history, always spoke as though he had been an eye-witness of the circumstance he detailed; nay, as though he had known their most secret thoughts.

And who is Schatten, whose history is yet unfinished? Who is this mysterious Weaver, whose deeds, if chronicled, would fill thousands of folios? He is everywhere about us: in the solitude of our chamber, in the press and throng of the street, in the wilderness and in the city.

—“MY DAYS ARE SWIFTER THAN A WEAVER’S SHUTTLE.”

THE WINE CELLAR.

A "MORALITY."

STEPHEN CURLEW was a thrifty goldsmith in the reign of the Second Charles. His shop was a mine of metal: he worked for the Court, although, we fear, his name is not to be found in any record in the State-Paper Office. Stephen was a bachelor, and, what is strange, he never felt—that is, he never complained of—his loneliness. His chased ewers, his embossed goblets, his gold in bars, were to him wife and children. Midas was his only kinsman. He would creep among his treasures, like an old grey rat, and rub his hands, and smile, as if communing with the wealth about him. He had so long hugged gold to his heart that it beat for nothing else. Stephen was a practical philosopher; for he would meekly take the order—nay, consult the caprice—of the veriest popinjay with the humility of a pauper, when, at a word, he might have out-blazoned lords and earls. If this be not real philosophy, thought Stephen, as he walked slipshod at the heels of his customers, what is?

Stephen was a man of temperance; he was content to see venison carved on his hunting-cups; he cared not to have it in his larder. His eyes would melt at clustering grapes chased on banquet goblets, but no drop of the living juice passed the goldsmith's lips. Stephen only gave audience to Bacchus when introduced by Plutus. Such was the frugality of Stephen to his sixty-fifth year; and then, or his name

had not been eternised in this our page, temptation fell upon him.

It was eight o'clock on a raw spring evening, and Stephen sat alone in his back-room. There was no more fire upon the hearth than might have lain in a tinder-box, but Stephen held his parchment hands above it, and would not be cold. A small silver lamp, with a short wick—for the keen observation of Stephen had taught him the scientific truth, that the less the wick, the less the waste of oil—glowed, a yellow speck in the darkness. On the table lay a book, a treatise on precious stones; and on Stephen's knee, *Hermes, the True Philosopher*. Stephen was startled from a waking dream by a loud and hasty knocking at the door. Mike, the boy, was out; but it could not be he. Stephen took up the lamp, and was creeping to the door, when his eye caught the silver, and he again placed it upon the table, and felt his way through the shop. Unbolting the five bolts of the door, but keeping fast the chain, Stephen demanded "who was there?"

"I bear a commission from Sir William Brouncker, and I'm in haste."

"Stay you a minute—but a minute," and Stephen hurried back for the lamp, then hastily returned, opened the door, and the visitor passed the threshold.

"'Tis not Charles!" cried Stephen, alarmed at his mistake, for he believed he had heard the voice of Sir William's man.

"No matter for that, Stephen; you work for men, and not for Christian names. Come, I have a job for you;" and the visitor, with the easy, assured air of a gallant, lounged into the back-parlour, followed by the tremulous Stephen.

"Sir William——" began the goldsmith.

"He bade me use his name; the work I'd have you do is for myself. Fear not: here's money in advance," and the stranger plucked from his pocket a purse, which in its ample length lay like a bloated snake upon the table.

Stephen smiled, and said, "Your business, sir?"

"See here," and the stranger moved the lamp immediately between them, when, for the first time, Stephen clearly saw the countenance of his customer. His face was red as brick, and his eyes looked deep as the sea, and glowed with good humour. His mouth was large and frank, and his voice came as from the well of truth. His hair fell in curls behind his ears, and his moustache, black as coal, made a perfect crescent on his lip, the points upwards. Other men may be merely good fellows, the stranger seemed the best. "See here," he repeated, and produced a drawing on a small piece of paper, "can you cut me this in a seal ring?"

"Humph!" and Stephen put on his spectacles; "the subject is——"

"Bacchus squeezing grape-juice into the cup of Death," said the stranger.

"An odd conceit," cried the goldsmith.

"We all have our whims, or woe to the sellers," said the customer. "Well, can it be done?"

"Surely, sir, surely. On what shall it be cut?"

"An emerald, nothing less. It is the drinker's stone. In a week, Master Curlew?"

"This day week, sir, if I live in health."

The day came. Stephen was a tradesman of his word, and the stranger sat in the back-parlour, looking curiously into the ring.

"*Per Bacco!* Rarely done. Why, Master Curlew, thou hast caught the very chops of glorious Liber, his swimming

eyes, and blessed mouth. Ha! ha! thou hast put thy heart into the work, Master Curlew; and how cunningly hast thou all but hid the dart of death behind the thyrsus of the god! How his life-giving hand clutches the pulpy cluster, and with what a gush comes down the purple rain, plashing into rubies in the cup of Mors!"

"It was my wish to satisfy, most noble sir," said Stephen, meekly, somewhat confounded by the loud praises of the speaker.

"May you never be choked with a grape-stone, Master Curlew, for this goodly work. Ha!" and the speaker looked archly at the withered goldsmith; "it hath cost thee many a headache ere thou couldst do this."

"If I may say it, I have laboured hard at the craft—have been a thrifty, sober man," said Stephen.

"Sober! Ha! ha! ha!" shouted the speaker, and his face glowed redder, and his eyes melted; "sober! why, thou wast begot in a wine cask, and suckled by a bottle, or thou hadst never done this. By the thigh of Jupiter! he who touched this," and the stranger held up the ring to his eye, and laughed again, "he who touched this hath never known water. Tut! man, were I to pink thee with a sword thou'dst bleed wine!"

"I," cried Stephen, "I bleed," and he glanced fearfully towards the door, and then at the stranger, who continued to look at the ring.

"The skin of the sorriest goat shall sometimes hold the choicest liquor," said the stranger, looking into the dry face of the goldsmith. "Come, confess, art thou not a sly roysterer? Or art thou a hermit over thy drops, and dost count flasks alone? Ay! ay! well, to thy cellar, man; and—yes—thine arms are long enough—bring up ten bottles of thy choicest Malaga."

"I!—my cellar!—Malaga!" stammered Stephen.

"Surely thou hast a cellar?" and the stranger put his hat upon the table with the air of a man set in for a carouse.

"For forty years, but it hath never known wine," cried the goldsmith. "I—I have never known wine." The stranger said nothing; but, turning full upon Stephen, and, placing his hands upon his knees, he blew out his flushing cheeks like a bagpipe, and sat with his eyes blazing upon the heretic. "No, never!" gasped Stephen, terrified, for a sense of his wickedness began to possess him.

"And dost thou repent?" asked the stranger, with a touch of mercy towards the sinner.

"I—humph! I'm a poor man," cried Curlew; "yes, though I'm a goldsmith, and seem rich, I—I'm poor! poor!"

"Well, 'tis lucky I come provided," and the stranger placed upon the table a couple of flasks. Whether he took them from under his cloak, or evoked them through the floor, Stephen knew not; but he started at them as they stood rebukingly upon his table, as if they had been two sheeted ghosts. "Come, glasses," cried the giver of the wine.

"Glasses!" echoed Stephen, "in my house!"

"Right, glasses! No—cups, and let them be gold ones!" and the bacchanal, for it was plain he was such, waved his arm with an authority which Stephen attempted not to dispute, but rose and hobbled into the shop, and returned with two cups just as the first cork was drawn. "Come, there's sunlight in that, eh?" cried the stranger, as he poured the wine into the vessels. "So, thou hast never drunk wine? Well, here's to the baptism of thy heart!" And the stranger emptied the cup, and his lips smacked like a whip.

And Stephen Curlew tasted the wine, and looked around, below, above; and the oaken wainscot did not split in

twain, nor did the floor yawn, nor the ceiling gape. Stephen tasted a second time; thrice did he drink, and he licked his mouth as a cat licks the cream from her whiskers, and, putting his left hand upon his belly, softly sighed.

"Ha! ha! another cup! I know thou wilt," and Stephen took another, and another; and the two flasks were in brief time emptied. They were, however, speedily followed by two more, placed by the stranger on the table, Stephen opening his eyes and mouth at their mysterious appearance. The contents of these were duly swallowed, and lo! another two stood before the goldsmith, or, as he then thought, four.

"There never was such a Bacchus!" cried Stephen's customer, eyeing the ring. "Why, a man may see his stomach fairly heave, and his cheek ripen with wine: yet, till this night, thou hadst never tasted the juice! What—what could have taught thee to carve the god so capitally?"

"Instinct—instinct," called out the goldsmith, his lips turned to clay by too much wine.

"And yet," said the stranger, "I care not so much for—— How old art thou, Stephen?"

"Sixty-five," and Stephen hiccupped.

"I care not so much for thy Death, Stephen; instinct should have made thee a better hand at Death."

"'Tis a good Death," cried the goldsmith, with unusual boldness, "a most sweet Death."

"'Tis too broad—the skeleton of an alderman with the flesh dried upon him. He hath not the true desolation, the ghastly nothingness, of the big bugbear. No matter; I'm content; but this I'll say, though thou hast shown thyself a professor at Bacchus, thou art yet but a poor apprentice at Death."

Stephen Curlew answered not with words, but he snored

very audibly. How long he slept he could not well discover, but when he awoke he found himself alone ; no, not alone, there stood upon the table an unopened flask of wine. In a moment the mystery broke upon him—and he sprang to his feet with a shriek, and rushed into the shop. No—he had not been drugged by thieves—all was as it should be. The stranger, like an honest and courteous man, had taken but his own ; and, without disturbing the sleeper, had quitted the house. And Stephen Curlew, the wine glowing in his heart—yea, down to his very nails, stood and smiled at the unopened flask before him.

Stephen continued to eye the flask ; and though its donor had shared with him he knew not how many bottles, Stephen was resolved that not one drop of the luscious juice before him should wet an alien throat. But how—where to secure it ? For, in the new passion which seized upon the goldsmith, the one flask seemed to him more precious than the costly treasure in his shop—a thing to be guarded with more scrupulous affection—more jealous love. In what nook of his house to hide the glorious wealth—what corner, where it might escape the profane glances and itching fingers of his workmen ? The thought fell in a golden flash upon him—the cellar—ay, the cellar ! Who of his household ever thought of approaching the cellar ? Stephen seized the flask and lamp, and paused. The cellar had no lock ! No matter ; he had a bag of three-inch nails and a stout hammer

The next morning neighbours met at the closed door and windows of the goldsmith, and knocked and shouted, shouted and knocked. They were, however, reduced to a crowbar, and, at length, burst into the house. Every place was searched, but there was nowhere visible old Stephen

Curlew. Days passed on, and strange stories filled the ears of men. One neighbour vowed that he had had a dream or a vision, he knew not which, wherein he saw the goldsmith whirled down the Strand in a chariot drawn by a lion and a tiger, and driven by a half-naked young man, wearing a panther skin, and on his head vine-leaves and ivy. An old woman swore that she had seen Stephen carried away by a dozen devils (very much in liquor), with red faces and goat legs. However, in less than a month, the goldsmith's nephew, a scrivener's clerk, took possession of Curlew's wealth, and became a new-made butterfly with golden wings. As for Stephen, after various speculations, it was concluded, to the satisfaction of all parties, that he must have been carried away by Satan himself, and the nephew cared not to combat popular opinions. But such, in truth, was not the end of the goldsmith. Hear it.

Stephen, possessed by the thought of the cellar, with the one flask, a lamp, nails, and hammer, proceeded to the sacred crypt. He arrived in the vault, and having kissed the flask, reverently put it down, and straightway addressed himself to the work. Closing the door, he drove the first nail, the second, third; and borrowing new strength from the greatness of his purpose, he struck each nail upon the head with the force and precision of a Cyclops, burying it deep in the oak. With this new-found might he drove eleven nails; the twelfth was between his thumb and finger, when looking round—oh! sad mishap, heavy mischance! awful error!—he had driven the nails from the wrong side! In a word—and we tremble while we write it—he had nailed himself in! There he stood, and there stood the flask. He gasped with horror; his foot stumbled, struck the lamp, it fell over, and the light went out.

Shall we write further on the agony of Stephen Curlew? Shall we describe how he clawed and struck at the door, now in the hope to wrench a nail, and now to alarm the breathing men above? No; we will not dwell upon the horror; it is enough that the fate of the goldsmith was dimly shadowed forth in the following paragraph of last Saturday:—

“Some labourers, digging a foundation near”—no, we will not name the place, for the family of the Curlews is not yet extinct, and there may be descendants in the neighbourhood—“near ——, found a skeleton. A hammer was beside it, with several long nails: a small wine-flask was also found near the remains, which, it is considered, could not have been in the vault in which they were discovered less than a century and three-quarters!”

Oh, ye heads of families! and oh, ye thrifty, middle-aged bachelors, boarding with families, or growing mouldy by yourselves, never, while ye live, forget the terrible end of Stephen Curlew. And oh, ye heads of families—and oh, ye aforesaid bachelors, albeit ye have only one bottle left, never, NEVER NAIL UP THE WINE CELLAR!

THE CASTLE BUILDERS OF PADUA.

GIULIO and Ippolito were sons of a farmer living near Padua. The old man was of a quiet and placable temper, rarely suffering any mischance to ruffle him, but, in the firm and placid hope of the future, tranquillising himself under the evil of the present. If blight came upon his corn one year, he would say 'twere a rare thing to have blights in two successive seasons ; and so he would hope that the next harvest, in its abundance, might more than compensate for the scarcity of the last. Thus he lived from boyhood to age, and retained in the features of the old man a something of the lightness and vivacity of youth. His sons, however, bore no resemblance to their father. Instead of labouring on the farm they wasted their time in idly wishing that fortune had made them, in lieu of healthy, honest sons of a farmer, the children of some rich magnifico, that so they might have passed their days in all the sports of the times, in jousting, hunting, and in studying the fashions of brave apparel. They were of a humour at once impetuous and sulky, and would either idly mope about the farm, or violently abuse and ill-treat whomsoever accident might throw in their way. The old man was inly grieved at the wilfulness and disobedience of his sons, but, with his usual disposition, hoped that time might remedy the evil ; and so, but rarely reproving them, they were left sole masters of their hours and actions.

One night, after supper, the brothers walked into the garden to give loose to their idle fancies, always yearning after matters visionary and improbable. It was a glorious night, the moon was at the full, and myriads of stars glowed in the deep blue firmament. The air stirred among the trees and flowers, wafting abroad their sweetness; the dew glittered on the leaves, and a deep-voiced nightingale, perched in a citron tree, poured forth a torrent of song upon the air. It was an hour for good thoughts and holy aspirations. Giulio threw himself upon a bank, and, after gazing with intentness at the sky, exclaimed—

“Would that I had fields ample as the heavens above us!”

“I would,” rejoined Ippolito, “I had as many sheep as there are stars.”

“And what,” asked Giulio, with a sarcastic smile, “would your wisdom do with them?”

“Marry,” replied Ippolito, “I would pasture them in your sageship’s fields.”

“What!” exclaimed Giulio, suddenly raising himself upon his elbow, and looking with an eye of fire upon his brother; “whether I would or not?”

“Truly, ay,” said Ippolito, with a stubborn significance of manner.

“Have a care,” cried Giulio, “have a care, Ippolito; “do not thwart me. Am I not your elder brother?”

“Yes; and marry, what of that? Though you came first into the world, I trow you left some manhood for him who followed after.”

“You do not mean to insist that, despite my will, despite the determination of your elder brother, you will pasture your sheep in my grounds?”

“In truth but I do.”

“And that,” rejoined Giulio, his cheek flushing, and his lip tremulous, “and that without fee or recompense?”

“Assuredly.”

Giulio leaped to his feet, and, dashing his clenched hand against a tree, with a face full of passion, and in a voice made terrible by rage, he screamed, rather than said, “By the Blessed Virgin but you do not!”

“And by St. Ursula and her eleven thousand virgins I protest I will.” This was uttered by Ippolito in a tone of banter and bravado that for a moment made the excited frame of Giulio quiver from head to foot. He gazed at the features of Ippolito, all drawn into a sneer, and for a moment gnashed his teeth. He was hastily approaching the scoffer, when, by an apparently strong effort, he arrested himself, and, turning upon his heel, struck hastily down another path, where he might be seen pacing with short, quick steps, whilst Ippolito, leaning against a tree, carelessly sang a few lines of a serenata. This indifference was too much for Giulio; he stopped short, turned, and then rapidly came up to Ippolito, and, with a manner of attempted tranquillity, said, “Ippolito, I do not wish to quarrel with you; I am your elder brother; then give up the point.”

“Not I,” replied Ippolito, with the same immovable smile.

“What, then, you are determined that your sheep shall, in very despite of me, pasture in my fields?”

“They shall.”

“Villain!” raved Giulio; and ere the word was well uttered he had dashed his clenched hand in his brother's face. Ippolito sprang like a wild beast at Giulio, and for a moment they stood with a hand at each other's throat, and their eyes, in the words of the Psalmist, were “whetted” on one another. They stood but to gain breath, then

grappled closer. Ippolito threw his brother to the earth, huddling his knees upon him, furious blows were exchanged, but scarce a sound was uttered, save at intervals a blasphemous oath or a half-strangled groan. Giulio was completely overpowered by the superior strength and cooler temper of his brother ; but, lying prostrate and conquered, his hands pinioned to his breast, and Ippolito glaring at him with malicious triumph, he cursed and spat at him. Ippolito removed his hand from his brother's throat, and ere his pulse could beat, Giulio's poniard was in his brother's heart. He gave a loud shriek, and fell a streaming corpse upon his murderer. The father, roused by the sound, came hurrying to the garden ; Giulio, leaping from under the dead body, rushed by the old man, who was all too speedily bending over his murdered child. From that hour hope and tranquillity forsook the father ; he became a brain-sick, querulous creature, and in a few months died almost an idiot. Giulio joined a party of robbers, and, after a brief but dark career of crime, was shot by the sbirri.

Ye who would build castles in the air—who would slay your hours with foolish and unprofitable longings—ponder on the visionary fields, the ideal sheep of Giulio and Ippolito.

THE FOLLY OF THE SWORD.

MAY we ask the reader to behold with us a melancholy show—a saddening, miserable spectacle? We will not take him to a prison, a workhouse, a Bedlam, where human nature expiates its guiltiness, its lack of worldly goods, its most desolate perplexity; but we will take him to a wretchedness, first contrived by wrong and perpetrated by folly. We will show him the embryo mischief that in due season shall be born in the completion of its terror, and shall be christened with a sounding name,—Folly and wickedness standing its sponsors.

We are in St. James's Park. The royal standard of England burns in the summer air—the Queen is in London. We pass the Palace, and in a few paces are in Birdcage Walk. There, reader, is the miserable show we promised you. There are some fifty recruits, drilled by a sergeant to do homicide, killingly, handsomely. In Birdcage Walk Glory sits upon her eggs, and hatches eagles!

How very beautiful is the sky above us! What a blessing comes with the fresh, quick air! The trees, drawing their green beauty from the earth, quicken our thoughts of the bounteousness of this teeming world. Here in this nook, this patch, where we yet feel the vibrations of surrounding London—even here Nature, constant in her beauty, blooms and smiles, uplifting the heart of man—if the heart be his to own her.

Now, look aside and contemplate God's image with a musket. Your bosom duly expanding with gratitude to nature for the blessings she has heaped about you, behold the crowning glory of God's work managed, like a machine, to slay the image of God—to stain the teeming earth with homicidal blood—to fill the air with howling anguish! Is not yonder row of clowns a melancholy sight? Yet are they the sucklings of Glory—the baby mighty ones of a future *Gazette*. Reason beholds them with a deep pity. Imagination magnifies them into fiends of wickedness. There is carnage about them—carnage, and the pestilential vapour of the slaughtered. What a fine-looking thing is war! Yet dress it as we may, dress and feather it, daub it with gold, huzza it and sing swaggering songs about it—what is it, nine times out of ten—but murder in uniform? Cain, taken the sergeant's shilling?

And now we hear the fifes and drums of her Majesty's Grenadiers. They pass on the other side; and a crowd of idlers, their hearts jumping to the music, their eyes dazzled, and their feelings perverted, hang about the march and catch the infection—the love of glory! And true wisdom thinks of the world's age, and sighs at its slow advance in all that really dignifies man,—the truest dignity being the truest love for his fellow. And then hope, and faith in human progress, contemplate the pageant, its real ghastliness disguised by outward glare and frippery, and know the day will come when the symbols of war will be as the sacred beasts of old Egypt—things to mark the barbarism of bygone war; melancholy records of the past perversity of human nature.

We can imagine the deep-chested laughter—the look of scorn which would annihilate, and then the smile of compassion—of the man of war at this, the dream of folly and the wanderings of an inflamed brain. Yet, oh, man of war!

at this very moment are you shrinking, withering like an aged giant. The fingers of Opinion have been busy at your plume—you are not the feathered thing you were; and then that little tube, the goose-quill, has sent its silent shot into your huge anatomy; and the corroding INK, even whilst you look at it, and think it shines so brightly, is eating with a tooth of rust into your sword.

That a man should kill a man and rejoice in the deed—nay, gather glory from it—is the act of a wild animal. The force of muscle and the dexterity of limb which make the wild man a conqueror are deemed, in savage life, man's highest attributes. The creature whom, in the pride of our Christianity, we call heathen and spiritually desolate, has some personal feeling in the strife—he kills his enemy, and then, making an oven of hot stones, bakes his dead body, and, for crowning satisfaction, eats it. His enemy becomes a part of him; his glory is turned to nutriment; and he is content. What barbarism! Field-marsals sicken at the horror; nay, troopers shudder at the tale, like a fine lady at a toad.

In what, then, consists the prime evil? In the murder, or in the meal? Which is the most hideous deed—to kill a man, or to cook and eat the man when killed?

But, softly, there is no murder in the case. The craft of man has made a splendid ceremony of homicide—has invested it with dignity. He slaughters with flags flying, drums beating, trumpets braying. He kills according to method, and has worldly honours for his grim handiwork. He does not, like the unchristian savage, carry away with him mortal trophies from the skulls of his enemies. No, the alchemy and magic of authority turns his well-won scalps into epaulets, or hangs them in stars and crosses at his button-hole; and then, the battle over, the dead not

eaten, but carefully buried—and the maimed and mangled howling and blaspheming in hospitals—the meek Christian warrior marches to church, and reverently folding his sweet and spotless hands, sings *Te Deum*. Angels wave his fervent thanks to God, to whose footstool—in his own faith—he has so lately sent his shuddering thousands. And this spirit of destruction working within him is canonised by the craft and ignorance of man and worshipped as glory!

And this religion of the sword—this dazzling heathenism, that makes a pomp of wickedness—seizes and distracts us even on the threshold of life. Swords and drums are our baby playthings; the types of violence and destruction are made the pretty pastimes of our childhood; and as we grow older, the outward magnificence of the ogre Glory—his trappings and his trumpets, his privileges, and the songs that are shouted in his praise—ensnare the bigger baby to his sacrifice. Hence slaughter becomes an exalted profession; the marked, distinguished employment of what in the jargon of the world is called a gentleman.

But for this craft operating upon this ignorance, who—in the name of outraged God—would become the hireling of the Sword? Hodge, poor fellow, enlists. He wants work; or he is idle, dissolute. Kept, by the injustice of the world, as ignorant as the farmyard swine, he is the better instrument for the world's craft. His ear is tickled with the fife and drum; or he is drunk; or the sergeant—the lying valet of glory—tells a good tale, and already Hodge is a warrior in the rough. In a fortnight's time you may see him at Chatham; or indeed he was one of those we marked in Birdcage Walk. Day by day the sergeant works at the block ploughman, and, chipping and chipping, at length carves out a true, handsome soldier of the line. What knew Hodge of the responsibility of man? What dreams

had he of the self-accountability of the human spirit? He is become the lackey of carnage, the liveried footman, at a few pence per day, of fire and blood. The musket stock, which for many an hour he hugs—hugs in sulks and weariness—was no more a party to its present use than was Hodge. That piece of walnut is the fragment of a tree that might have given shade and fruit for another century; homely, rustic people gathering under it. Now it is the instrument of wrong and violence; the working tool of slaughter. Tree and man, are not their destinies as one?

And is Hodge alone of benighted mind? Is he alone deficient of that knowledge of moral right and wrong, which really and truly crowns the man king of himself? When he surrenders up his nature, a mere machine with human pulses to do the bidding of war, has he taken counsel with his own reflection—does he know the limit of the sacrifice? He has taken his shilling, and knows the facings of his uniform!

When the born and bred gentleman, to keep to coined and current terms, pays down his thousand pounds or so for his commission, what incites to the purchase? It may be the elegant idleness of the calling: it may be the bullion and glitter of the regimentals; or, devout worshipper, it may be an unquenchable thirst for glory. From the moment when his name stars the *Gazette*, what does he become? The bond-servant of war! Instantly he ceases to be a judge between moral right and moral injury. It is his duty not to think, but to obey. He has given up, surrendered to another the freedom of his soul: he has dethroned the majesty of his own will. He must be active in wrong, and see not the injustice: shed blood for craft and usurpation, calling bloodshed valour. He may be made, by the iniquity of those who use him, a burglar and

a brigand; but glory calls him pretty names for his prowess, and the wicked weakness of the world shouts and acknowledges him. And is this the true condition of reasonable man? Is it by such means that he best vindicates the greatness of his mission here? Is he when he most gives up the free motions of his own soul—is he then most glorious?

A few months ago chance showed us a band of ruffians who, as it afterwards appeared, were intent upon most desperate mischief. They spread themselves over the country, attacking, robbing, and murdering all who fell into their hands. Men, women, and children all suffered alike. Nor were the villains satisfied with this. In their wanton ruthlessness they set fire to cottages, and tore up and destroyed plantations. Every footpace of their march was marked with blood and desolation.

Who were these wretches? you ask. What place did they ravage? Were they not caught and punished?

They were a part of the army of Africa; valorous Frenchmen, bound for Algiers to cut Arab throats; and, in the name of glory, and for the everlasting glory of France, to burn, pillage, and despoil; and all for national honour—all for glory!

But Glory cannot dazzle Truth. Does it not at times appear no otherwise than a highwayman with a pistol at a nation's breast? a burglar with a crowbar entering a kingdom? Alas! in this world there is no Old Bailey for nations, otherwise where would have been the crowned heads that divided Poland? Those felon monarchs anointed to—steal? It is true the historian claps the cutpurse conqueror in the dock, and he is tried by the jury of posterity. *He* is past the verdict, yet is not its damnatory voice lost upon generations? For thus is the world taught—albeit slowly taught—true glory; when that

which passed for virtue is truly tested to be vile ; when the hero is hauled from the car and fixed for ever in the pillory.

But war brings forth the heroism of the soul : war tests the magnanimity of man. Sweet is the humanity that spares a fallen foe ; gracious the compassion that tends his wounds, that brings even a cup of water to his burning lips. Granted. But is there not a heroism of a grander mould—the heroism of forbearance ? Is not the humanity that refuses to strike a nobler virtue than the late pity born of violence ? Pretty is it to see the victor with salve and lint to his bloody trophy—a maimed and agonised fellow-man ; but surely it had been better to withhold the blow than to have been first mischievous, to be afterwards humane.

That nations professing a belief in Christ should couple glory with war is monstrous blasphemy. Their faith, their professing faith, is—"Love one another ;" their practice is to—cut throats ; and more, to bribe and hoodwink men to the wickedness, the trade of blood is magnified into a virtue. We pray against battle, and glorify the deeds of death. We say beautiful are the ways of peace, and then cocker ourselves upon our perfect doings in the art of man-slaying. Let us then cease to pay the sacrifice of admiration to the demon—War ; let us not acknowledge him as a mighty and majestic principle, but, at the very best, a grim and melancholy necessity.

But there always has been—there always will be—war. It is inevitable ; it is a part of the condition of human society. Man has always made glory to himself from the destruction of his fellow ; so it will continue. It may be very pitiable ; would it were otherwise ! But so it is, and there is no helping it.

Happily we are slowly killing this destructive fallacy. A long breathing time of peace has been fatal to the dread magnificence of glory. Science and philosophy—*povera e nuda filosofia!*—have made good their claims, inducing man to believe that he may vindicate the divinity of his nature otherwise than by perpetrating destruction. He begins to think there is a better glory in the communication of triumphs of the mind, than in the clash of steel and the roar of artillery. At the present moment a society, embracing men of distant nations—"natural enemies," as the old wicked cant of the old patriotism had it—is at work plucking the plumes from Glory, unbracing his armour, and divesting the ogre of all that dazzled foolish and unthinking men, showing the rascal in his natural hideousness, in all his base deformity. Some, too, are calculating the cost of Glory's table: some showing what an appetite the demon has, devouring at a meal the substance of these thousand sons of industry—yea, eating up the wealth of kingdoms. And thus by degrees are men beginning to look upon this god Glory as no more than a finely-trapped Sawney Bean—a monster and a destroyer—a nuisance—a noisy lie.

JOHN HORNER; THE MAN WITH
"THE PLUMS."

UNLESS the early education of the reader has been culpably neglected, he must have a due knowledge of the extraordinary sagacity, and, withal, self-complacency of John Horner, or, as he is familiarly denominated by his historian, "little Jack Horner," the wise child, who—

"Sat in a corner,
Eating a Christmas pie;
He put in his thumb,
And pulled out a plum,
And said—'What a brave boy am I!'"

Touched by the intelligence and amiable self-glorification eternised in this simple verse, we have more than twice regretted the silence of history on the after achievements of the hero: if, we have thought, the child *be* father to the man, what plums must John Horner have picked out—what pæans must he have sounded to his own successful parts! The world before him, one large Christmas pie, he from his little stool in the chimney-corner of his grandam, to his soft-cushioned chair in the old oak room of his beautiful manor-house, went on, putting in his thumb, and picking out a plum, and crowing shrill-voiced triumph at every new possession. To such a genius it would matter little, we have thought, where the plums were scattered: it was not

necessary to him that they should lie on the surface, to be counted by a blind man—no, were there but a single plum, and that in the pie's centre, the invincible and unerring thumb would dig it forth. How often do we see the thumb of an Apollo grope vainly in a pie full of plums, when the thumb of a John Horner shall pick them out as a hen picks up barley ! Shrewd and happy John Horner ! who, shutting his eyes to the vanities of trifling spirits, considered this wide earth as only one large Christmas pie, the only things worth feeling for, the scattered plums. With such fine wisdom, with so just a valuation of the use and purposes of life, the thumb of a John Horner hath greater power than the right arm of Alcides. To us there has ever appeared such a beautiful adumbration of the prosperous man in the self-satisfied plum-pulling boy, that when we fell upon the record of his later life, in a word, his full history from the chimney-corner to his very handsome tomb—and much do we regret our inability to designate the peace-promising cherubim and the palm-leaves thereon in finest marble sculptured—we felt a thrill, a glow of satisfaction, a music of the brain, and a dilation of the heart, such as would seize a scholar were he suddenly to come upon that lost heap of gold, the lost Greek tragedies.

It was a short time since our good fortune to be guest in a fine old country house, which, though the largest mansion for ten miles round, was too small for the heart of its possessor. It was one of those capital pigeon-hole mansions, where fifty visitors may do what they will, unknown to each other, until rung down to dinner ; a very garrison for good fellows. We had promised—albeit in such matters we are imbecility itself—to assist at the construction of a kite for Master Tommy, the third flaxen-haired, blue-eyed little boy of our worthy host. We commenced our task with proper

gravity, and, we avow, with best intentions. However, in more serious matters than kite-making, well meaning goes for little if unaccompanied by success. Tommy, with as much contempt as he could put into a face of seven years old, took his paper, lath, and string from our uncultivated fingers, and sought a more skilful workman among the servants. Philosophically resigning ourselves to the poor opinion of Tommy, we sat upon the sward, and in a very few minutes our thoughts, escaped from all human things, were flying among the rooks, repairing and building their nests on a ring of fine old elms, a bow-shot from the mansion.

A rookery to us presents the almost instant means of escape from less grave matters; there being to our mind something inexpressibly serious in the manner and habits of the birds, which that Cyclops, man—*saniem eructans*—with deadly bow and rifle, murders for his throat. Nay, and when killed, when brought tumbling down from their native branches, to be deprived, nine times out of ten, of their lawful reputation, nearly all the pigeon-pies sold by confectioners, being at a certain season—we give the truth on the faith of a late Irish friend—made of young rooks—when slain, they are not even gazetted in paste in their own name! To kill a sparrow is but trifling; indeed, the late Mr. Cobbett assures us that it is the only way to cure a sparrow of his bad habits (legislators until lately have held the same opinion of naughty men). To kill a pigeon is a kind of poulterer's sport—little more than cutting the throat of a duck: but to shoot a swallow—that winged soul, that spirit of a bird darting between heaven and earth! We have heard, too, of monsters who have eaten of blackbird pies; nay, roasted larks—think of the glorious creature, "beating the vaulted heaven" with a song that seems to

be everlasting—fairly steeping, saturating the fields with music—spitted with twenty minstrels before the kitchen coals! And yet these horrid feasts are less frightful than a banquet from a rookery. The feeder who eats blackbirds and skylarks is, perhaps, little more than a cannibal, fond of young opera-singers: we can, with some stretch of our elastic charity, find some excuse for him in his excessive love of music; but it almost becomes a matter of moral iniquity to shoot rooks for our larder. Mark their gestures—hear them speak, for if they do not speak, the defect is in your ears and not in their voices. With what gravity—what composed reason—they move from bough to bough! What order is in all their movements—what general harmony in their design! Are they not a set of sages, governed by laws as true as truth—spirits sublimed in the regions of unalterable right? They are the Brownes, the Bayles, the Newtons, the Lockes of the air; and the omnivorous glutton who feeds on rooks would, after this our essay, ruthlessly make a meal off a royal astronomer, an historian, or even an archbishop.

Such, influenced by the notes and motions of the jetty builders, was our soft conviction—and in the moment, we think we could have bound ourselves to Brahmin—when there came a sound from the mansion that struck upon our heart; it was the dinner-bell. Church bells have been christened the sweetest names, have had the most illustrious sponsors; princes and princesses have answered for their metal sons and daughters. Why doth not the dinner-bell undergo some such ceremony; or is it that we may be safely trusted with our own natural reverence of it, uninfluenced, unschooled by any other teaching? As we hurried towards the house, we felt the question, but had not then time satisfactorily to answer it. As we approached

the door, little Tommy with his completed kite, and a look of saucy triumph, stood before us.

"There," said the boy, "if you can't make a kite, I suppose you can make a tail," and, saying this, he held to us a roll of dirty paper for the purpose.

"Yes, Tommy, we'll try and make a tail—but there's a shower coming on, and it's now late. To-morrow, the kite shall have its tail." Tommy was, evidently, not wholly satisfied with the procrastination, but as we had placed the roll of paper in our pocket, he seemed instinctively to respect the principle of possession; though he looked sulky, he said nothing. Tommy might have taught his elders.

It was a cold night in spring, and the rain pattered against the window, and came at intervals down the chimney, hissing in the fire, as though to remind us of the cheerlessness without and the comfort within, when, the dinner over, we found ourselves in our room, one of the set of warm, comfortable nooks whereof we have already spoken. We sat by the fire—rose—went to the bookshelf—for, let the apartment be ever so small, our host had it stored with what Cicero calls the soul of a house, books. The reader knows the mood with which a man in such a room, and in such a time—with an hour or two to spare from bed—approaches a bookcase. Now, we were solicited by Montaigne—and now, our old friend Apuleius appealed to our ancient love—and now, the wise, the gently-resolute Erasmus silently conjured us—and now our finger was on the pure, firm English of Walton's *Lives*—and now on that fresh and odorous homily, the *Holy Living*—and now on rich Boccaccio—now on his plainer, younger brother, Geoffrey Chaucer. We stood undecided—a sultan amid a circle of willing beauties. And as we stood a reverence

fell upon our heart—glowed along our blood—for the unalienable gifts bestowed by books upon us; wealth, which no *præmunire*, no attainment, no constructive treason, no bitterness of poverty could take away. We were the guiltless, triumphant Faustus, conjuring by the so potent art of memory the incarnate graces, virtues, beauties of our nature round about us. Mighty sorcery—glorious magic—that hangs a wattled hut with tapestry coloured with richest hues,—that peoples even “the blasted heath” of this working-day world, with things of loveliness, enduring faith and everlasting hope; that turns the eye from outward squalor upon inward glory—that makes deaf the ear to the hurly of mere human days, quickening it to the coming music, as from a far procession, of immortal life!

We turned from the bookcase to the casement; in doing so, we felt in our pocket the roll of paper proffered to us by Tommy. We then perceived that it was carefully tied with a piece of dirty, faded, red tape, which had secured the body of the MS.—for it proved to be one—from the mice, although the edges bore zigzag evidence of their depredation. Seating ourselves, as carefully as though it had been Egyptian papyrus in lieu of an English copy-book—we unrolled the paper, and judge, reader, how our eyes sparkled and our heart beat, when we deciphered these words!—“*Memoranda of the Life of John Horner, the man with ‘the Plums.’*” We at once felt satisfied that it was the later life of little Jack, the hero of the chimney-corner, and turning to the fire, we already saw our name writ in the embers, with the glowing addition of “F.R.S.A.,” an honour fully deserved by the discoverer of so precious a relic as the written life of a man who hath had so many imitators, and among whom are people of what is called the first respectability. Having, however, no interest with

the society, whose favour we yearn to obtain, we take the present means of wooing its encouragement. We have a very few words of our own to add. We have left our address with our publisher.

It may not be impertinent to state that the mansion whereat we made the discovery—for as Tommy was recompensed with a quire of gilt-edged writing-paper for the dirty scribbled roll he had picked from out a lumber-room, he can make no claim whatever to the history—was some seven years before in the possession of a gentleman, a reverend gentleman, who spent four-fifths of his time in London, of the name of Horner. Whether he was a descendant of little Jack, and if so, in what degree, there is nothing in the manuscript to indicate. It is evident, however, that the writer of the history had a perfect knowledge of his subject; an advantage, whatever may be the honest wishes of an author, not always attainable. He has, moreover, sprinkled the history with remarks and speculations, arising from the sentiments and conduct of his hero, a vice not to be too much condemned by those who would have their nuts ready cracked for them. We have a high respect for the honesty of a man of this taste, whom we once heard declare, that in reading *Tom Jones*, he always skipped the introductory chapters and passages. We claim no thanks in awarding to our readers the like privilege, seeing they have the uncontrolled power of taking it.

We have unrolled the MS.; whether it had been more profitably converted into the tail of Tommy's kite, than to its present use, no man of real modesty will consider us called upon to say.

CHAPTER I.

THOMAS HORNER rented a cottage and two acres of ground, on the borders of the Great Forest ; any tree of which had seen as much of the world, had endured as many changes, as the said Thomas. Fixed to the soil—spring, summer, autumn, winter, looked upon him with their unvarying features ; and he heeded no revolution, save of the earth about the sun, the human changes on the earth itself all the while unthought of and unknown. And Thomas Horner, taking example of the birds, had paired himself with a female of his species, or, as might vulgarly be said, had married a wife. And Mr. and Mrs. Horner were of the same clay. Happy, thrice happy are such matches ; when joined by the "moral fitness of things," there is no assumption of superiority, no impatient sense of better knowledge—no fatal contrast. We had an excellent aunt, a woman of exalted gifts, inhumanly married in her sixteenth year to a painstaking fox-hunter. She outlived her husband, though not the memory of him, and yet we had never known the hymeneal discrepancy, but for a trifling household accident. A giddy, laughing cousin, setting the tea-things, inadvertently placed a common white clay cup (how it came there we know not) in a radiant china saucer, real India. Our aunt turned pale, and trembled ; with tears in the good woman's eyes, and her heart in her voice, she lifted up her fan, saying solemnly, "Barbara, why will you be so thoughtless ? If you did but know, if you could but think, what a pang it is to me to see a common cup in a china saucer !" The emotion of our aunt at once disclosed to us her long-hidden sorrow.

The loves of Thomas and Susan Horner were requited

with a boy, the hero of our tale—in fact, with John Horner. Who that saw him crawling at the paternal door, could have prophesied his future greatness? At six years old, however, he showed signs of superior wit, though, unhappily, the exhibition was too often lost upon the beholders. Nay, at five, an incident occurred which, with Ben, the pedler, marked him for serious things; for, with very little hesitation, he satisfied the querist Ben of the precise number of black beans and white beans required to make three. Ben shook his head, and upon his own responsibility declared the boy was born for a bishop. This prophecy obtained new weight from a circumstance that happened about a year afterwards. A neighbour cottager had lost his pig; it had strayed into the forest, and it was supposed—a belief, by the way, extremely unjust to the natural sagacity of the pig—that the animal had lost its way, or, what was much more probable, had been transmuted into bacon by the gipsies.

"What would you give for your pig?" asked little Jack of the owner, who had almost resigned himself to the loss, but whose hopes were once more quickened by the question, "Will you give one leg of him?"

"Not an ear, Jack—not an ear; I did know he'd come home," said the man, now quite assured of his long-lost pork. Another week, however, passed, and there was no pig. "What will you give for him?—two legs?" asked Jack, again accosted by the owner, anxious for his property. It was in vain that the simple Thomas Horner essayed his paternal authority to induce Jack to disclose the retreat of the hog gratis. The boy avowed that he merely inquired the extent of the reward, in case he might meet, in his rambles in the forest, for he knew every inch of it, the lamented fugitive. Days rolled on, and at length the owner of the beast came to the cottage of Horner to make

conditions. Susan Horner and her hope, Jack, were alone at home.

"I'll tell ye what, dame, if the pig be brought to me, and I know Jack knows where he is, I don't mind giving——"

"Three legs?" chirped Jack from the chimney-corner.

"I don't mind giving——"

"Why, neighbour," said the elder Horner, entering the house, "your pig is safe and sound, and fat as butter, stied in the hollow of the great oak in the middle of the forest. Whoever has left him there, has left him well—he hasn't wanted mast, I warrant."

This was quite true; whoever had fallen in with the straying animal, had safely housed it from wind and weather, and fed it daily with acorns and beech-nuts. It cannot be denied that suspicion fell upon little Jack, who was, however, rewarded for the ill opinion, by the arrival of several of the neighbours, who declared that in the business of the pig, Jack Horner had discovered intelligence enough for a vicar. Proceed we with the growing wisdom of little Jack.

It was Christmas Day, and Jack had completed his eighth year. His friend Ben, the pedler, in acknowledgment of small courtesies done him by Dame Horner, presented Jack with a plum-pie, from a shop in the neighbouring town. On that day Ben was a guest at the cottage, where the families of two or three acquaintances were gathered about the fire—little Jack—with his Christmas pie upon his lap, having silently chosen the warmest corner. Jack remained dumb, but still Jack fed.

"Why, you'll never eat all the pie yourself, Jack," said a neighbour; "you'll give a picce to Bill?"

"Oh! yes," and Jack held forth the remains; "for I—ha! ha!—I have picked out all the plums."

The pedler laughed at the extraordinary sagacity of Jack, who, encouraged, again declared the achievement, which, put into metre by a native poet, has come down to us a touching allegory of worldly wisdom, and worldly self-respect.

The pedler settled into thoughtful looks at Jack, and next morning opened his mind to Thomas Horner. "The boy was losing himself in such a place; he had only to go into the world to become a man—it was to slight the gifts of Providence to put such a light under a bushel. He (Ben) was not so young as he had been: and wanted help with his pack—besides, he had taken a liking to the boy, and as it was plain he would never be of any use to his father, why not save his food and clothes?"

We pass the conference of man and wife—the half-objections of the father, the tears of the mother—it was decided; Jack Horner was to go into the world—he was to follow the pedler. With misty eyes, Jack turned from the door, but, in a trice, began to whistle like a blackbird. The pedler looked down with pride upon his pupil; and, in truth, Jack was worthy of no worse a master.

Ben, the pedler, knew men, as the generality of men know clocks. It was enough for him to address himself according to the hour; he considered only the outward marks of things, caring little, asking not, to know the inward wheels and springs which move the hands of life. "He didn't make men," he would say, "he only traded with them. A guinea was a guinea all the world over, and the best of consciences couldn't make it five-and-twenty shillings." And by this light, Jack Horner saw, as it is called, the world. And then Jack's golden thumb! He would pick plums from what seemed hopeless places—still vaunting his bravery to the world, all too apt to take a

resolute man at his own valuation. Jack had faithfully followed the pedler nine whole years, when an accident occurred that somewhat rudely snapt the tie between them. Ben, in his peripatetic mode of traffic, had many strange customers; now Ben was a man above vulgar curiosity, and in his dealings in the highway and by the roadside, for there was no place where, business calling, he would not open his pack, he never asked the name or calling of a stranger, his whereabouts, or any other prying question. Ben bought or sold, buying and selling being to him the only aim of serious man. But the truth is, Ben had made a weary pilgrimage about the earth, and now began to feel fitful yearnings for home and rest. The "Unicorn" was a thriving house, on the Warwick Road, and in all his life he had never felt so placid, so composed, so open to the influence of peace and good humour, as when seated in the easy-chair of the late Mr. Wassail, looking with the eyes of anticipation upon the living relict of the buried man. Mrs. Wassail was about five-and-forty, with one of those neutral faces, which escape observation, unless, as it sometimes happens, a scrutiny be rigorously insisted upon by the owner.

"I wonder, Mrs. Wassail," thus, one evening, spoke Ben; "I wonder that you let your neighbours take such advantage of you!"

"Lord, Mr. Benjamin, what can a lone woman do? Here, Dolly—I wish, Mr. Benjamin, you wouldn't bring that Jack here; there's no getting nothing done for him—Dolly, take these pipes into the parlour."

"I'm sure, Mrs. Wassail, if you desire it, I'll send Jack Horner about his business. I think with you, that he begins to be troublesome."

"Pah! how I hate 'em, when they're neither men nor

boys," exclaimed the widow, with marked disgust in her face.

"True, Mrs. Wassail, true. Perhaps the autumn of life is the only time for real happiness—all on this side of forty is, I am now convinced, nothing but smoke. After forty begins solid enjoyment."

"I don't know," said Mrs. Wassail, delicately insinuating by her manner that she was not yet capable of judging.

Ben shifted his ground. "As you say, Mrs. Wassail, once let a woman be left alone, and everybody puts upon her. Do you see what they have been doing at the 'Black Bull'? Ha! all spite and malice against the 'Unicorn'; you may see the sign three miles off—there's gold enough on the horns and collar and chains of the bull to gild the Lord Mayor's coach. Then, to be sure, as you say, there's a man at the 'Black Bull,' and yet it's hardly fair of him towards a widow."

"Let him do his worst," said Mrs. Wassail, "yes, his worst; I'll be a match for him! Ha, Mr. Ochre, pray come in."

Benjamin suddenly bit his pipe, lowered the corners of his mouth, and, with his eyes fixed upon the visitor, jerked a nod of recognition. Rubens Ochre, to the mechanic trades of plumbing and glazing, added the loftier graces of sign-painting. Now, although Benjamin was no enemy to the arts in the abstract, he was no friend to Ochre, simply because it was the misfortune of the poor man to be an unencumbered widower. And this fact had been three times forced upon the knowledge of Ben by the presence of Ochre fixed in the chair of the late landlord. Indeed, there had been as much silent manœuvring—as great a display of tactics between Benjamin and Ochre to obtain possession of the chair, as between any two generals for

vantage ground. Ochre, casting a look of civil malignity—and the reader, if he has seen anything, must have seen such looks—at the occupied seat, a look which was met by Benjamin stretching himself to his full length, ostentatiously publishing his enjoyment,—subsided into resignation, and meekly sank upon a chair, rush-bottomed.

"How odd!" said Mrs. Wassail. "Mr. Benjamin was just speaking of you, Mr. Ochre."

"I!" said Benjamin, wonderingly.

"Of me?" asked the painter, as if resenting a liberty.

"It's all the same, I mean of the 'Black Bull,'" observed Mrs. Wassail. "To be sure they've made a fine show."

"I hope, Mrs. Wassail, you don't think it's my work? A bull! well, if it isn't more like a zebra! But, as I said, you don't think I'd paint against the 'Unicorn'?"

"No, no, I'm sure not, Mr. Ochre; but Mr. Benjamin was about—I know he was—about to say, that if our unicorn——"

"True, true, I was going to say that *our* unicorn—" and the eyes of Benjamin sparkled at the possessive pronoun—"pray, for I suppose that is your business," and it was extraordinary how soon Ben fell into the air of the master, "pray, what colour do you intend to paint our unicorn?"

"What colour?" asked the artist, "why, what colour would you have him painted?"

"Why, let me see," said Benjamin, seriously taking the question as an appeal to his judgment, "I should say——"

"As if unicorns were of two colours. Ha! ha! what colour?" and Ochre laughed with professional ferocity.

"And why not?" asked Ben, very seriously. "Why not?"

"I can't say; it isn't for a painter to dispute with nature;

all he has to do is to copy her. Therefore, depend upon it, Mrs. Wassail," and the artist turned with a smile upon the widow, "the unicorn shall be as like as life."

"Still, as we've never yet had a sign, but only the name, though the poor man who is in his grave could say it wasn't my fault, I should like to know the colour."

"To be sure, Mrs. Wassail, the real natural colour; a bright white with a dash of sky-blue."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Benjamin, "and why not pink with spots of yellow? Blue for a unicorn! Ha! ha!"

"The natural colour, the colour of life, the only colour," asserted the painter with proper vehemence.

"The only colour! You don't mean to tell me," said Benjamin, beginning to be stern, "that there aren't unicorns of all colours?"

"I suppose, next you'll say there are piebalds?" cried Ochre with a sneer.

"*Will* say? to be sure I will. It's very well for people who grow like a cabbage upon one spot, but I—I have seen the world; the world, Mr. Ochre, and I say there are piebald unicorns."

"Did you ever see 'em?" rapidly returned the painter.

Ben opened his mouth, and was, we fear, suddenly about to soil his reputation for truth, when, recovering himself, he sank back in his chair, and with a dignity, very useful on difficult occasions, asked, "What is that to you?"

"Yes, I thought so. I tell you, Mrs. Wassail, that the carriage of the King of the Indies is drawn by six unicorns, all of 'em white with a dash of blue," said the artist.

"If that be the case," observed Mrs. Wassail, "we can't do better"

"White and blue?—they're all greys," cried the pedler.

"You don't mean to call me a liar?" asked Mr. Ochre.

"I mean to call your white grey, that's all," returned Benjamin.

"I'm satisfied," said the painter, "for I can bear much, Mr. Benjamin; but no *shit* upon my truth. I'm satisfied."

"It's more than I am; and I say if you paint our unicorn any other colour but grey——"

"Why, what's the matter?" said a thin, tall, elderly man, who had the right of entry into the parlour, by virtue of his office of schoolmaster, and caster-up of Mrs. Wassail's accounts. "What's the matter?" said Mr. Birchenough, not without a sinister glance at the chair of the late landlord, possessed by Benjamin. It was odd, but the three seemed to look upon the easy-chair as the lawful first step to the widow's bed; hence the uneasy associations suggested by rival occupancy.

"The matter! Why, and it's so silly, they will quarrel," said the landlady, "about the colour of the King of Indy's unicorns."

"White, white, with a dash of blue——" cried Ochre, looking to Birchenough as an umpire.

"Grey, or mottled grey," shouted Benjamin, nodding at the schoolmaster.

"There again," fired the artist, "do you mean to say I tell an untruth?" and his rage was rising above blood heat.

"Yes, do you mean to say that Mr. Ochre isn't to be believed?" asked Birchenough, benevolently stirring the coals.

"I mean to say this: as a man, a husband, and a father——when he had a wife and child——he is, and was, the pattern of truth; but as a painter he is the greatest liar upon earth."

"Say no more, Mr. Benjamin; so as you said nothing against my private character, I am satisfied." Here is a

delicate distinction, which if pondered upon by ministers and politicians, may happily save much gunpowder. Ochre cared but little for his veracity as a painter of public signs, but was morbidly sensitive upon the score of private virtues. All his horses might, for what he cared, be abused as long-eared asses—his white swans geese, but he was not, at the same time, to be accused of the slightest tendency to misrepresent.

"And you've been quarrelling about the colour of unicorns?" asked Birchenough ironically. "Why didn't you first prove beyond all doubt that there *were* unicorns?"

Though Birchenough put this question with a malicious intention, it is nevertheless a query that might induce fiercer disputants than even the painter and the pedler to defer *sine die* more weighty debates than that on the colour of an unicorn.

CHAPTER II.

JACK HORNER, at the present time of our story, was in his eighteenth year. "If there be something in true beauty which vulgar souls cannot admire," and we do not hesitate to strengthen Mr. Congreve's opinion with our own, Jack Horner was calculated to pass upon nine people out of ten as a very pretty fellow. He was slim and straight, and of good growth; he had red cheeks, curly black hair, and a something in his eye which Dolly called spirit, but which one less observing might denominate cunning. Jack was precisely one of those lucky people to whom nature bountifully denies the fatal gift of sensibility. He was, morally, cased like an armadillo. Jack, however, had his virtues:

let us give him his due. He never told a lie when the truth would do just as well; never offended man, woman, or child, when it was clear nothing was to be got by the injury. Moreover, Jack Horner would very often use the word respectability. Now, here was a youth to carry a pack along the highway of life, filling it, ere he had travelled half the road, with the best gifts of fortune, and halting at the top of the hill to build and plant. And Jack Horner was wisely provident: his shrewdness at eight years old, so touchingly manifested in the matter of the plum pie, never deserted him. No; let the world crack about him, Jack Horner never forgot the plums! Let us renew the history of Jack with an illustrative instance.

Jack, among his many shining parts, had a peculiarly susceptible ear; nature had endowed him with an admirable organ, and Jack, like a grateful servant, cultivated the good gift. Indeed, very often he has been known to give himself a lesson at a keyhole. We have felt it necessary to state thus much to account in some way for what still must seem the strange behaviour of our hero. We trust that the dispute in the matter of unicorns has not yet escaped the reader. Be it known, then, that as Birchenough delivered himself of what we consider a most perplexing query, Smash, the exciseman, joined the party in the parlour, and was almost immediately followed by Jack Horner himself.

"Why, how now, Jack?" said Ben, taking the pipe an inch from his mouth, and looking a look of offended authority at the intrusion. "How now, Jack?"

"Won't you sit down, John?" said Mrs. Wassail, with sudden complacency; and all the seats being engaged, we are bound to state that she looked in the eyes of Master Horner, then threw a glance at the easy-chair of the late Mr. Wassail, and—but she had been troubled with a cold

some days—slightly coughed. "Won't you sit down?" asked the widow, but not one of the party offered to move.

"No, I thank you, Ma'am," said John, with a modesty that would have won the heart of any woman, more hearts—we are convinced—being won by modesty than by any other masculine faculty of the mind. "I want to speak to you," and John looked at Benjamin.

"Come along then, Jack," and Benjamin rose from his chair, and immediately walked out of the parlour. He was, however, met in the passage by Mrs. Wassail, who had gone for a seat for John, and was urged back into the room.

"There, do sit down," said the widow, and with smiling violence she thrust Jack into the easy-chair of the late Mr. Wassail, at the same time offering a less voluptuous seat—in fact, a wooden stool—to Benjamin the master. Mr. Ochre stared like a man who has made a sudden discovery—Birchenough uttered a prolonged "hem," and Benjamin twisted on the stool as though he were seated upon broken glass—Smash laughed outright.

"Well, John Horner?" said Benjamin, the politeness of some people rising in proportion with their disgust.

"I've been thinking, master," said John, "that I've been a great deal of trouble to you;" Benjamin courteously suffered John to proceed without interruption—"a great deal of trouble to you; and as I know the goodness of your heart is so great, that whatever burden I might be upon you, you would never think of turning me away——"

"Do take some ale, John," said Mrs. Wassail, pressing the beverage upon the speaker, and preparing herself to be much affected.

"I—I—your health, gentlemen—I think it but right that I should leave you of my own accord."

Benjamin was evidently struck by this self-sacrifice on the

part of John ; he, however, concealed whatever emotion he felt, merely slightly nodding affirmation.

"Why, John, you'd never think of going like a lamb alone in the world?" asked the widow, feeling for the corner of her apron.

"There's a Providence, Mrs. Wassail," said John.

"To be sure there is," corroborated Benjamin.

"A very excellent young man," said Ochre, the other suitor for the easy-chair.

"It does one good to witness such a lively trust in Heaven. Beautifully said—yes, there is a Providence," exclaimed Birchenough, and he too, from the corner of his eye, looked at the chair.

"Since I've been in business," observed the exciseman, "I never doubted it."

"I hope I've never lost sight of it, even when I lost my husband," said Mrs. Wassail, "but still, that so young a creature——"

"Young," said the painter, "I was married when I was eighteen."

"To be sure," said Mrs. Wassail, and she fixed her eyes upon John Horner.

"Though it was very wrong," suddenly rejoined the artist, feeling that *he* had just been very wrong—"though it was very wrong——"

"Well, Jack, but you were saying," said the master pedler, returning to the point.

"That as I can't think of any longer being a weight upon you, I am come to say good-bye."

"Good-bye, John," said Benjamin, with a smile, and "good bye" was uttered with touching cordiality by Ochre and Birchenough.

"But before I go," said John, "as you've been so good

to me, I should wish you to see that everything is right; and so I'll just bring the packs before these gentlemen, and lay out all the articles, and get Mr. Smash to be a witness——"

"Not at all necessary," said Benjamin insistingly.

"But I must for my own satisfaction. You know there's a great deal of property, and if anything——"

"I am quite satisfied, John, and why should you trouble yourself?" asked Benjamin.

"You know, now I'm leaving you, I have nothing but my character—and if there should be any after-clap—I must bring down the bales," and Jack half rose from his chair, but was pushed down again by Benjamin, in whose features there was a sudden look of ferocity darkly contrasting with the simple and composed face of John Horner.

"Really, I think the young lad is only right," said Smash, the exciseman, "and for my part, I don't mind being witness, ay, and signing the inventory of the articles."

"Thank'ee," said John, again rising upon his legs, and again pushed down upon the chair by Benjamin, "thank'ee, because there's a great deal of nice property. In the first place, there's the Brussels lace——"

"What!" cried the exciseman, and the exclamation pierced the marrow of Benjamin.

"And the French cambric and crimson velvet," and John Horner unconsciously enumerated several articles which aroused the suspicious mind of the exciseman, and awakened smiles in the faces of Ochre and Birchenough, still looking at the chair. Benjamin swelled and turned black at the innocent discoveries made by his unsophisticated pupil.

"I say, Mr. Benjamin, this must be looked into," said Smash with an ominous visage.

"It's all a lie," said the pedler—"lace! not a thread—"

French cambric! not a strip—the scoundrel wants to ruin me; there isn't a——"

"What!" cried John Horner, lively in his love of truth, "you don't mean to say there isn't in the green pack——"

"The green pack!" roared Benjamin, drawing himself up, and looking wonderingly.

"The green pack!" repeated Horner, in unchanged tones.

"What have I to do with the green pack? A'n't you ashamed of yourself? you must smuggle, forsooth—rob the king, God bless him, of his lawful right, and then hope to put your sins upon me? Isn't the green pack, and all in it, your own? Is it likely, gentlemen, that I would have a lad for nine long years—and it was a bad day for me when I took him from the chimney-corner—without letting him do something for himself?" And Benjamin looked an appeal to the company.

"But the green pack," said Smash, with the stern purpose of an exciseman.

"Hear me, gentlemen," cried Benjamin. "I was one night at the 'Three Bells'; I had had a good week, and my heart was open—he must recollect it."

"I don't indeed, master," replied John, unmoved in his serenity.

"We went up to our beds, and there as I lay, thinking of this life and the next, and one thing and another, I said to John—he was lying on the floor in one of the corners—I said to him, 'John,' says I, 'you're growing up, and should think of doing something for yourself. There isn't much in the green pack—he always carried the green one—but what there is I give you to trade with—be a good, honest, hard-working man and copy me. Now, all this I said, and if I didn't may I——'"

"Then the green pack is Jack's?" asked the exciseman.

"And every thread that's in it," replied Benjamin—"I'm willing to take my oath of it. He knows all my talk to him at the 'Three Bells.'"

"Then it wasn't a dream?" said John Horner, courageously looking in the face of his master.

"A dream!" echoed Benjamin, and he ground his teeth, as he tried to smile upon John.

"Why, I do recollect all that you say, at the 'Three Bells,' but I was so heavy to sleep at night, that in the morning I thought it was only a dream. How could I expect that——"

"But where is the pack?—the green pack," cried the exciseman, roaring for his prey.

"Yes, where is it?" said Benjamin, "and, rascal, for your wicked lies I do hope they'll transport you."

"Serve him right," judged the painter.

"Transportation is too good for him," remarked Birch-enough with a leer, for John Horner was still in the easy-chair.

"What! for a little—little smuggling?" asked Mrs. Wassail; the charity of the sex assailed by cambric and Brussels lace.

"The man who'd smuggle," said the schoolmaster, whose patriotism had advanced with his ale score, he, like Regulus, best vindicating his country when deep in a barrel, "the man who'd smuggle would murder."

"You're right," cried Benjamin, and his clenched fist on the table gave solemnity to the apothegm.

The green pack was speedily produced, and its contents rigidly scrutinised by the exciseman. However, albeit the pack had many excellent commodities, there was nothing that could be held contraband. John Horner merely

uttered something about a mistake, and again arranged the pack, Benjamin bursting with silent anger.

CHAPTER III.

"WHERE is John Horner?" asked Mrs. Wassail of Dolly next morning.

"Gone, Ma'am!" said Dolly in tears.

"Gone!" cried the widow, biting her lip.

"Gone!" shouted Benjamin, and he groaned.

"Gone," sobbed the maid—"gone, green pack and all."

Dolly spoke the truth; at daylight, John quitted the "Unicorn," bearing on his shoulders the green pack, which, before, as he said, he had dreamt to be his, but which was now his assured property by the testimony of the donor.

Benjamin was somewhat comforted under his loss by the departure of John—the ungrateful John; inasmuch as a dangerous rival for the easy-chair was removed from the field, though the victory remained long disputed, fortune, at various seasons, equally favouring the three combatants. Astounded are we that Mr. Wassail, poor man, rested quietly in his grave, whilst his relict was so variously assailed for his easy-chair.

To return to John Horner. The reader may have felt some surprise at the absence of the contraband articles from the green pack. Let us explain as we proceed: the truth is, John had removed them; in other words, he had—picked out the plums.

John moved onward with his pack, and there was a fluttering at his heart, and a singing in his brain, and he was all but overcome with the sense of his own capacity—

with the glory of his recent triumph. He was now his own master: he carried his own pack. However, tranquillity came with time, and some twelve hours after his departure from the "Unicorn," John was seated in the chimney-corner of a hedge ale-house, calmly calculating his future prospects. John sat with thoughtful eye upon his pack; and, perhaps, he cared not from a deep sense of gratitude to compete with his old master; but, certain it is, he pondered with growing disgust upon the trade of pedler.

"What! Jack! How's Ben?"

John slowly turned his head towards the speaker, and beheld Josiah Weevil, a small dealer of Stratford, who had alighted from his horse on his way to Birmingham, for goods in his trade. "I'm told," said Weevil, "if he isn't already married to the 'Unicorn,' he ought to be."

"Ha! Master Weevil, that little parlour, and that nice chair—I'm a thinking they're better than tramping through mud and dust, under rain, and sun, and snow, and hail. To be sure," and John thought of the penalty attending the parlour and the chair, "to be sure, there's the widow herself."

"Can't buy land without stones, nor meat without bones," was the homely yet ungallant expression of Weevil. "And now, I suppose, as Ben is all snug, he's turned you off?" John drew a long sigh. "I thought so—the way of the world, John. But I always thought Ben was all for himself."

"It's hard to name anybody he likes better," observed Horner; "and therefore I oughtn't to complain."

"And whose pack is that, John?" asked Josiah; "it's a full-grown one."

"Pretty well," replied John, with philosophical indifference. "But, Master Weevil, I don't like the trade;

it isn't the work of a Christian, but an elephant. No—I—I'll sell my pack."

"And is it really yours?" asked the small trader, and his eyes glistened.

"And little enough for nine years' walking. I'll sell off my stock; and, as father and mother are getting old, I'll go home and live with them, and take all my money to them, and—yes, I hope I haven't forgot to honour my father and mother."

The old woman of the house clasped her withered hands, and looked down on the filial John Horner with speaking tenderness. Bridget, her daughter, sighed at the goodness of the youth, and Josiah Weevil drew close to the young pedler, and snatched up his hand; squeezing it, he began, "John, I always thought you too good for the trade."

"You must lie so, to do anything at it," said Horner.

"But I was not aware," continued Weevil, "that you had such a proper feeling towards the authors of your being; I mean, your father and your mother."

"I hope I shall never forget my own flesh and blood," replied Horner with animation, and we can answer for him, that he never did.

"What have you got in your pack, John?" asked the trader, sinking with dignity from morals to business.

"Cloth, stuffs, linen, and—yes, Master Weevil, I shall never be happy till I'm at home again."

"An excellent son, John. Any silks?"

"A remnant of thunder-and-lightning. There's nobody like a mother."

"True, true. Has—" and the trader lowered his voice, and with the manner of a man who puts a dear question to a dear friend—"Has a bit of Brussels fallen of late?"

"Ha!" and John sighed and whispered, "smuggling

isn't what it was." And then aloud: "Poor soul! I hear she's much altered."

"All mortal things change. What for a bit of cambric?"

"Don't talk in that way," said Horner, melted, taking the back of his hand to his eyes. "Don't talk in that way. Hem! a handkerchief's now worth any money."

"And you intend to go home and turn husbandman, eh, John? Well, you are right, very right; there is something so noble in getting your bread from the soil—oh, they're nobody," said Weevil, observing the eye of John cast from the old woman to Bridget. "Let's look at the pack; who knows, I may be saved a ride to Birmingham."

The pack was unbuckled, its contents laid open to the eye of Weevil, who with an educated look scrutinised every article. "Ha—humph! Yes, John; a bit of earth, a few seeds and a spade—what so good? You cheat nobody—you flatter nobody—you backbite nobody—you envy nobody." And then recurring to the immediate business: "How much, now, for the lot?"

"Very true, Master Weevil; a bit of land of your own—a spade—a strong arm, and a clear conscience. Let me see; how many guineas," and John began silently to calculate with his fingers.

"How nice to see your little crop springing, and to know that it comes from nobody's loss! How very sweet to eat the bread, not of other people's misfortune, but of our own honest labour! I wouldn't give a pin for that," and Josiah suddenly pointed to an article which, as it appeared to him, John considered "too curiously."

"Ha! I shall, indeed, never be happy till I get home again; to eat what we sow, eh? That's something like, Master Weevil. I should say twelve guineas for the whole pack."

"Twelve guineas! Pooh! buckle up again, John. Twelve fiddlesticks! I'm sure I wish I could give up trade, and go to the fields; that is, indeed, a pure employment."

"I gave three pounds for the velvet," said John.

"For at your business," observed Josiah, not hearing the pedler, "as you say, to make anything you must lie so. I should say nine guineas would be one too many for the lot."

"I'm sure eleven is one too little; but there's no harm done," and John Horner proceeded to secure the pack.

"Well, I might—and yet I—well, it's a little rash of me, but—say nine guineas."

John was about to close the bargain, when, turning his eye up from the pack, he saw the visage of Josiah, and seeing it, he held his peace, and continued to buckle. There was a pause for a minute, when Weevil cordially slapped John on the shoulder.

"As I'm a living man, John," said Weevil, "I wouldn't give anybody else eight pound; but I like you—yes, it isn't often that we meet with a son who has such a respect for his parents—such a good, dutiful lad. Ha! John, you remind me of myself when I was your age; yes, just such another;—and so, lad, I'll give you what you asked. Here's the ten pounds."

"Guineas," said John Horner, with peculiar expressiveness. It was but a word, and yet, like the "swear" of the ghost in "Hamlet," it seemed to vibrate with the very soul of the speaker.

"Well, well—friends ought not to part upon pounds and guineas," said the benevolent Weevil.

"To be sure not," acquiesced John Horner. "Guineas."

"Well, may I die if you don't drive the hardest bargain," cried Weevil, reddening at the tenacity of John.

"My father and my mother," said John, and he counted the money laid upon the table by Josiah.

Let it suffice the reader to be told that Josiah Wcevil mounted his horse, and with the pack—a bargain, as in his heart he knew full well—before him, turned his way towards Stratford. John resumed his seat in the chimney-corner, holding council with himself as to his next day's march. We dare not doubt that, with the rising sun, he would have started for his home near the forest, had not his humanity been most powerfully appealed to by a sudden lamentable accident, of which we must give the following rise and progress.

CHAPTER IV.

"WELL, father, you know, it isn't my fault ; you know I must eat."

"To be opposed by one's own flesh and blood."

"Times are so bad, father."

"This—this it is to have a son."

"Right's right, father—don't blame me for that. I'm sure I wouldn't have joined the opposition if I could have lived without it."

"Ha!—well, it can't last, that's one comfort : it can't last. Do your worst, we shall beat the opposition."

"They pay very well, that's all I know."

"They promise to pay, you mean ; but I know every place they have upon hand, and I know how they fill 'em. But—ha ! ha ! join the opposition !—it can't last."

Let not the reader hastily conclude, from the preceding colloquy, that we would trap him into politics. By no

means; the father and son above conversing are not members of Parliament; patriotism is not their theme; they speak of stage-coaches, and not of a ministry. The opposition is the opposition on the Birmingham road, and not on the road to Windsor.

"I must do my duty to my employer," said Young Tom, "and so, father, you won't think the worse of me as a son, if I beat you."

"Beat *me*?" and the soul of a Greek charioteer glowed in the eye, and elevated the expression of Old Tom, as he scornfully smiled at the impossibility. "But you've always been a trouble to me."

"I can't help it, if I was found too big for a jockey. I had rather been on the turf than the box, I'm sure! but it's flying in the face of Providence to blame me for my weight. Good-bye, father, we start at six;" and Young Tom still lingered, and unsatisfactorily played with his fingers, and looked in Old Tom's face. "Good-bye, father." Old Tom bent his brow, and smoked his pipe with greater determination; but Old Tom spoke not. "Good-bye, father"—more smoke: "good-bye, father," yet an increase of smoke—"well, if you won't say good-bye, why, good-bye, father," and Young Tom, like Æneas, departed in a cloud.

The "Comet," driven by Old Tom, started at due season, and pursued its fiery way, when, to the agony of the driver, the axle broke, and a delay of two hours was the unhappy consequence. Passing a few intense exclamations on the part of Old Tom, it may suffice to state that the accident was repaired, and the coach once more away. The time, however, lost by Old Tom, had been gained by Tom's son, who, though announced to start an hour later than the "Comet," was, if reputation be not a bubble—which we sometimes think it is, seeing how very easily some people

blow it—pledged to reach the goal even before his father. The "Comet" travelled on, the horses being visited with the sins of the broken axle; the creatures fairly "devoured the way," and many were the mute glances of remonstrance cast by the passengers at Old Tom, who, it was plain, had made himself up for desperation. Now, a traveller would venture to suggest a less rate of speed, when Old Tom, with his mottled cheeks, his under lip turning over like the lip of a ewer, and his green and yellow eyes glaring down upon his horseflesh, deigned no answer, but applied the whip.

"For God's sake, Mr. Coachman," said, or rather crowed, an elderly lady inside, thrusting her head out of the window.

Down came the whip.

"Mr. Coachman, I suppose—" it was a legal gentleman of Staple's Inn who now addressed Old Tom, "I suppose you are aware that, no matter what accident may come to us, we may all recover?"

Again the horses sprang and quivered.

"My good man," cried a third passenger, and again the cattle suffered, Old Tom resenting every attempted interference of the biped on the quadruped.

"Hast thou *no* humanity?" asked the Quaker.

"None," replied the lash, for not one syllable escaped Old Tom.

"I'll get out, if we live to change," said the inside lady, a spinster; though she bore a "charmed life," being an annuitant.

A pause ensued, and the goaded horses began to feel the good effects of silence, when the noise of wheels was heard behind. Old Tom turned his head—it was but for a moment. Gripping his reins as a Cyclops would grip a bar, setting his teeth, and his eyes burning like molten glass, he looked at his horses, like a hungry Abyssinian

choosing a dinner from the living animal. The lash cut through the air like steel, and amidst the cries of the men, and the shrieks of the women, the horses, urged to madness, tore away. Still the "Star," guided by Young Tom, gained upon the "Comet." Old Tom turned all colours as the sound became more heavy; putting his stony heart into his arm, he lashed and lashed—but yet the "Star" came nearer. Five minutes and the coaches were parallel. Young Tom ventured a look from the corner of his off-eye at his respected parent; that look met no returning glance—for Old Tom seemed no longer a man, but an automaton flail. For a brief time, the speed between father and son was equal. At length the "Star" advances—and the "Comet," thanks to infuriated horse-flesh—wins the way, and again a grim smile makes terrible the face of Old Tom. However, Young Tom has too much of the old man in him, to give—in a matter of business—any precedence to his own father. He, too, has a whip, and the horses know it. The "Comet" is a bow-shot before—Young Tom wields his right arm—the "Star" shoots on! There is a narrow lane, but what is that to the cause of the "opposition"?—what the near declivity? Again the whips sing in the air—the "Star" gains upon the "Comet"—is near it—so near, that wheels strike wheels—the leaders of the "Star" break from their traces—the "Comet" overturns—the "Star" has a clear roof from the concussion—and, amidst the plunging of the horses, the shrieks and groans and faintings of the terrified and the wounded, Young Tom has vindicated the dignity of the "opposition." Old Tom lies stunned with a broken arm, and Young Tom mourns two fractured ribs.

Scattered here and there were the various outside passengers, those of the inside crawling as they best could

from the window. The legal gentleman from Staple's Inn shrugged his shoulders, with a satisfied air, and approaching the Quaker—who was seated on a heap of stones, declaring that he was dead—bade him take heart, assuring him that he was certain "to recover." This was the more magnanimous of the attorney, as he, upon his own evidence, was suffering martyrdom from an "inward bruise." Happily, there were no mortal accidents. The shrieks and groans were, however, of the most appalling kind; mothers, crying for their children—husbands, yes, husbands, calling for their wives. Old Tom swearing—Young Tom shouting. In the midst of this, it was a sight for Socrates to behold the exquisite equanimity of a former inside passenger. He was a middle-sized man, with the appearance of a belly; he had clawed a box from the outside of the overturned coach; and, unlocking it, with considerable agitation withdrew its contents; in other words, a very handsome violoncello. The musician, his features quite aghast, set him down on a heap of gravel next the Quaker, and—the air yet ringing with the sound of lamentation from his fellow-passengers,—he twanged the strings, and dismay fled from his countenance. He next essayed a successful *pizzicato*, and his features lighted up as he went fiddling on, and at length with a gladdened face, and in a voice of triumph, he exclaimed to the wounded Quaker—"Providential escape! not the slightest damage done!"

Fortunately, the accident took place within a few yards of the public-house where sat and mused our hero. Old Tom and Young Tom were, for good reasons, placed in the same bed, the other spare room being devoted to another passenger, seriously injured. "How are you, father?" said Young Tom, on the departure of the doctor, who had carefully attended to their hurts. "How are you, father?"

Old Tom grunted and was silent. At length he spoke; but more to his own communing spirit than to his own flesh and blood. "Humph! How can people expect good luck, when they lower the prices?"

"If I had had but Betsy for the off-leader," said Young Tom, imitating the independence of his father, and talking only to himself,—“if I had only had Betsy.”

"Humph! Well, he ought to drive horse-flesh, that's what he ought, but it should be in a wheel-barrow," said Old Tom, soliloquising.

"Well, you have been wrong, mayhap, you have," said Young Tom, "but, poor fellow, how can you help it, if you haven't been taught no better?"

"What!" cried Old Tom, suddenly twisting himself in bed, and jerking his broken arm, he groaned and turned pale.

"Father,—how are you, father?" and Young Tom raised himself so quickly up, that he gasped with the pain of his fractured ribs. "How are you, father?" And Young Tom leaned over, looking in his father's face. "Well, father, if ever you find me in the road in opposition again, send the wheels over me. Why, it's a judgment!"

"Tom," said the old man, and he took hold of his son's hand.

"Father!"

"Tom!" and Old Tom shook his son's hand and smiled.

"Tom,—how are you?"

"Why, I may say hearty—how are you?"

"Tom," and again the old man smiled and squeezed his hand, "it can't be mended now, but there *was* room between me and the stump."

Young Tom said nothing in defence—but he kept his word; he was never again found in opposition to his father.

(There is—it will be allowed—sometimes good to be picked from a broken bone.)

The coachmen disposed of, let us attend to the other wounded passenger, the tenant of the best room in the way-side house.

On the crash without, John Horner, the landlady and her daughter, immediately rushed into the road. John looked about him, not knowing, in the confusion, who to aid. At length, he espied a middle-aged gentleman dressed in glossy black, with a massive gold watch-chain, three rings on his fingers, and a brooch the size of a half-crown in his bosom, lying in the road, screaming for help. The sympathies of John were touched, and compassion lending him strength, he lifted the wounded man, with the nicest care, into the house. Nay, with the consent of the guard, he took one of the horses, and galloped off for a surgeon, who, on his arrival, pronounced a fracture to have taken place in the right leg of Andrew Thiselton, stockbroker, such being the name and profession of the well-dressed sufferer.

Now, until this untoward accident, Andrew Thiselton had been one of those unbelievers who, walking on rose-leaves all their lives, have no faith in the possibility of weariness and blisters. He was one of those who are content to take tales of martyrdom as bold designs on the credence of human nature : mere pen-and-ink sufferings, never endured, because *they* could not endure them. Andrew once visited the Tower, and, on being shown the interesting spoils of the Armada, declared he had no faith in the thumb-screw; he was induced to try it, and then, certainly, he roared himself a convert. If people were unfortunate, Andrew would put a wise face upon the calamity, declaring that every man was master of his fate. In a word, Andrew Thiselton would

have met the rumour of a famine in a neighbouring state, by triumphantly producing the receipts of *his* wine-merchant, poulterer, and butcher. After all, there is an unconscious humility in the race of Thiseltons; themselves wanting nothing, they cannot understand how fortune should have been sparing towards their neighbours.

For a whole fortnight, Andrew remained at the public-house, and John Horner was as constant to the bed as the bed-post. The patient was quite won by the disinterested assiduity of the youth, who had been pronounced by the landlady as one of the most affectionate of sons, giving all he had to his father and mother. One night, as John sat by the sufferer, fanning what might be the flies from Andrew's face, lest they should disturb him in his sleep—not that John was certain that he slept—Mr. Thiselton observed—"John! how should you like to go to London, John?"

"Anywhere in the world, Sir—for all over the world, Sir, honest bread has the same taste."

"Have you wound up my watch, John?"

"Yes, Sir,"—and to give John his due, he had been particularly careful of the chronometer; he had, moreover, twenty times counted the jewels with which it was stopped; for the diamonds were to him stars in which he tried to read the character and destiny of the owner. Now, he thought nothing less than a lord could afford their brilliancy—now, if not a lord, a baronet at least.

"Humph! John,—how should you like a place?"

"Jewelled—in eight holes,"—said John, in a reverie, his thoughts driven back to the watch.

"What!" said Andrew Thiselton.

"Sir!" said John, startled, and again addressed himself to flap away the imaginary flies that might disturb the patient.

"That will do, John—I don't see any flies myself."

"No, Sir—perhaps not, Sir; but, saving your presence, Sir, I do;" and again John flapped,—John feeling with people of higher station and higher sense, that it is sometimes necessary to feign the flies to hold the employment.

"Well, John, as the doctor says I may be removed next Monday, you shall go with me to London!"

Happy was the hour when John, standing among the appalled and wounded, selected Andrew Thiselton, the wearer of the chain, the brooch, and the rings! Gifted John! endowed by nature with that cool yet quick perception which at all times, and in all cases,—picks out the plums!

CHAPTER V.

NEXT to living in a square is to live in a street "out" of a square. The house of Andrew Thiselton was thus fortunately placed. The dinner was just over as the master of the house, attended by John Horner, drove to the door. Andrew, however, had to meet a new inmate—a gentleman, henceforth to be garnered up as an especial friend of the family. Whilst Mr. Thiselton disputes with the hackney-coachman, we have time to sketch the characters of his interesting household.

Mrs. Thiselton had brought her husband ten thousand pounds, and thought any other attention in a wife a low-minded superfluity. She was not handsome; indeed, she was of that clay which demands very thick gilding. Miss Whitney, her sister, was a middle-aged maid: she owned to six lustres, though it was shrewdly supposed by her bosom friends that she did not acknowledge all her griefs. But

Miss Whitney—to use a phrase that ladies sometimes apply to their gowns, though rarely to each other—wore well; that is, she wore not at all. She was one of the few people who look as if they had never been younger, and, consequently, would never look older: in short, Miss Margaret Whitney was a maid in Dresden china.

There were three children, the offspring of the mutual love, or mutual matrimony, of Mr. and Mrs. Thiselton; but as the pledges were in the nursery, they provoke, on our part, no further attention.

On the arrival of Mr Thiselton, two gentlemen were with the family. The elder was named Nehemiah Sackcloth—the younger, Joseph Sackcloth: it will at once be presumed they were brothers. But the following incident will illustrate the fraternal connection in a most touching and instructive manner. Joseph had been called from the room, when Nehemiah—he was a square-built man, with a large head, buff complexion, big black eyes, a profusion of whisker, and glossy raven hair, clipped formally round the forehead—thus, in modulated voice, bespoke the sympathy of his hearers, Mrs. Thiselton and Miss Margaret Whitney.

“Ha! ladies, you can hardly conceive the anguish *that* man”—he spoke of his absent brother—“that man causes me. Had I not been supported by the charity and resignation which peculiarly belong to my profession”—let us not omit to state that Nehemiah Sackcloth called himself reverend, he having an independent congregation in a subscription chapel a few miles from town, where the influence of his character had had its marked effect on the sins and levity of his neighbours. Some idea may be received of the austere virtues and eloquent persuasion of the reverend gentleman, when we state that Mr. Sackcloth had, among other benevolent triumphs, induced two dairymen

not to milk their cows on a Sunday! To proceed—"The charity and resignation which peculiarly belong to my profession, I should have sunk under the shameful—no, let me not say shameful—the imprudent conduct of Joseph."

"You never say so?" exclaimed Mrs. Thiselton, rather surprised, for Nehemiah had an hour before shaken Joseph by the hand, very warmly.

"I wish I didn't," said Nehemiah, ostentatiously strangling a groan.

"Can it be? Then why do you acknowledge him?" asked Miss Whitney.

"After all, Madam, he is my brother: I have long struggled with myself, but—you have no conception of what he is capable."

"You alarm me, Mr. Sackcloth," said Mrs. Thiselton, with much composure.

"I think he'd compass any imprudence," said, or rather cried Nehemiah; for as he went on blackening his brother he became greatly affected at the negro he was painting.

"Would he, indeed?" said Miss Whitney. "Well, I'm sure he looks——"

"Oh, Madam, in this world of sin and outsides, who would trust to looks?" asked the reverend Nehemiah, and he stroked his hair.

"Very true, no one—no one," concluded Mrs. Thiselton. "But what—what may be his peculiar vice?"

"Dear lady, it is hard for a brother to speak thus; but he is a crafty man—a generally wicked man—a man of no principle. In fact,"—and the voice of the speaker thickened with emotion,—*"in fact, I should be very sorry to trust him with my spoons."* And the reverend Nehemiah Sackcloth took out his pocket-handkerchief, and wept. Almost at the same moment Joseph entered, and Nehemiah,

doubtless urged by disgust of the sinner, making an excuse to see the children, quitted the apartment.

Joseph Sackcloth and the ladies sat for a space in silence. At length, Joseph folded his arms, moved his head backwards and forwards, and sighed very profoundly. "Ladies," said Joseph, "you saw *that* man? Ha! I blush to call him—my brother."

"Mr. Sackcloth!" exclaimed the ladies together.

"Yes,—I blush, ladies—blush. You little know what he can do."

"I thought you were the best friends when you met?" said Mrs. Thiselton.

"Would it have been right, Madam, to quarrel in your house? Friends! Oh, Miss Whitney, you don't know what he is."

"What?" asked Miss Whitney; and "what?" questioned Mrs. Thiselton.

"He is an artful man, Madam—a very designing, artful man; I may say a dishonest man. He is my brother, but"—and Joseph took out his pocket-handkerchief for the climax,—"*but he's a thief!*"

"A thief!" cried the ladies.

"Yes, a thief," repeated Joseph; "for now I recollect, he once did steal a fiddle."

A loud knock at the door announced the arrival of Mr. Thiselton, and at the same time abridged the fraternal sorrows of Joseph. Mr. Thiselton hurried into the room to embrace his wife, who, though she always dwelt in the cold proprieties of affection, was on the present occasion, as Andrew thought, more than usually chilly.

"Why, my dear—well—I thought after my terrible accident—nearly lost my leg—rather lame now—I did think you'd have been glad to see me, after such an accident."

"Oh, Mr. Thiselton, we have thought of it!——"

"And where—and how are the children?"

"And they, too, have thought of it: Mr. Sackcloth has written them such a beautiful thanksgiving for the chastening mercy that has fallen upon you, to win you from the vanities of life."

"What! thanks for my broken leg?" asked the father.

"Don't speak in that light way, Mr. Thiselton. A broken leg, in your case, is a mercy, as Mr. Sackcloth ——"

"And who is Mr. Sackcloth?" said Mr. Thiselton; and as he put the question Mr. Nehemiah entered the room, and with his linked hands lying on his bosom, his eyes upon the carpet, and his mouth fixed with a smile, he moved gently towards the former master of the house. Mr. Joseph Sackcloth at the like time advanced to Mr. Thiselton, who stood perplexed between both the brothers, when the three children walked into the apartment. The father started at the altered manner of his little ones, who were wont to frolic like kids. "Billy — Emma — Robert," cried the parent, and held out his arms; but Billy, Emma, and Robert, glancing at Mr. Nehemiah Sackcloth, the little puppets, pulled by strings, fell by one accord upon their knees, and putting up their innocent hands, began aloud and together to repeat the "beautiful thanksgiving" composed by the Reverend Nehemiah Sackcloth, for the broken leg vouchsafed their father, as the means of winning his heart from all carnal delights.¹ Poor Andrew Thiselton! he was not, as we have prefaced, of the softest nature; but in this instance, he stared for a moment, like one possessed, at the thanksgiving group, and stumbling into a chair, sobbed and wept. Mrs. Thiselton smiled grimly at the emotion of

¹ The reader may possibly be shocked at this ghastly improbability. It is from life.

her husband, and approaching him, said she was happy to perceive that the truth had at last found him out! Mr. Nehemiah Sackcloth raised his eyes to the ceiling, and moved his lips with inward prayer; but whether for the soul of Andrew Thiselton, or in penance for a stolen fiddle, we cannot determine. Miss Whitney, like the Mother Teresa, was in an ecstasy, looking at Andrew—and Joseph, with busy, tender thoughts, contemplated Miss Whitney. At this solemn and affecting moment, John Horner somewhat clumsily entered the room. He was instantaneously transfixed by the eyes of Mrs. Thiselton. John stood fascinated by the glance; he felt that he had broken into a sanctuary. Now, a less judicious youth would have instantly withdrawn, with a damaged character for decency; but John Horner was resolved to stay, and amend his error. Thus, gently closing the door behind him, he sank upon his knees, and held up his hands, in admirable imitation of the little children.

The solemnity over, Mrs. Thiselton, looking at John Horner, asked her husband, "Who is this?"

"A youth whom I found of some use to me in my late trial; I have brought him up to take him into my service," said Andrew.

"I hope you know who he is, Mr. Thiselton. I trust he is decent and respectable; because, you know, Fanny must sleep with him," said Mrs. Thiselton, and John Horner stared.

"I don't intend that he should be here, but, I think, I have a corner for him at the office," replied Mr. Thiselton.

(It may be necessary to state that Edward the footman had been discharged in consequence of his non-attendance at a sermon preached by Nehemiah Sackcloth, and that it

was the duty of the footman of the house to sleep with Fanny, the silky-haired spaniel of Mrs. Thiselton.)

"He seems a youth of considerable piety," said Miss Whitney, as John Horner quitted the room.

"He didn't go upon his knees as if he were used to do so," said the uncharitable Joseph Sackcloth.

"Right, dear Joseph—I marked that," said Nehemiah.

"And now you mention it, there was an awkwardness in his manner that—I trust, Mr. Thiselton, you have not brought an atheist into the family?" asked his wife.

"A very excellent young man," said Andrew. "But why need you be so particular? Don't I tell you that he'll not be in the house, but at my office—that I want him for the 'Change?"

"Ha! Mr. Thiselton, there is no wonder that you have lost so much in stock of late! How can you hope to prosper on 'Change, whilst you employ clerks of such lax morality?"

"Yes, Madam—but the irreligion of money-changers!" said Nehemiah Sackcloth, and sighed.

"Yes, Sir—yes: with such people about him, it's no matter of astonishment that Mr. Thiselton is so often an unprofitable 'bear.'"

Mr. Nehemiah Sackcloth said nothing, but he sighed again, and left the room; Joseph and Miss Whitney followed him. Mrs. Thiselton sat opposite her husband; she evidently wished to prolong the subject of his sinfulness in the money-market, but the subject was too much for her. Hence, after a violent struggle of some minutes, she rose, and placing her handkerchief to her eyes, quitted the apartment.

Andrew Thiselton looked about him, stunned and bewildered; he had never been allowed to exercise pure

despotism in his house, but he now found himself almost wholly stripped of his little prerogative: it was therefore with a trembling hand, and a feeling of suspense, that he rang the bell to inquire of the servant if he might be allowed anything for dinner.

CHAPTER VI.

"WHAT sort of a creature is Fanny?" asked John Horner of one of the maids.

"Such a beautiful creature!" was the answer, "and so good-tempered."

John paused at his meal, for he was dining in the kitchen. "I suppose you haven't too many beds in this house?" said John.

"Not too many," said the maid. "You'll have to take Fanny out every day in the park."

"I shan't mind that at all—'specially if you say she's so good-tempered," answered John.

"She has only one bad habit; she will run into the water," said the maid.

"Bless me!" said John.

"But that's to be got over, if you walk with a string about her neck."

"A string!" cried John.

"Here the pretty creature is! Fan, Fan,"—and the silky-haired spaniel gambolled into the kitchen, leaped upon the table, and with genuine hospitality began to lick the face of the discomfited John. The next day, however, Horner learned the full intentions of Mr. Thiselton, who proposed, as John was no mean arithmetician, to place him as something

between a clerk and a light porter, in the office in the city. John had been installed about a fortnight, in which time he had given the liveliest satisfaction to his employer, who, albeit he said no word of encouragement, could not hide the feeling from the quick perception of the newcomer. John's fellow-clerks, however, despising his industry, which they called sycophancy, resolved to keep him down. "Horner," said one of the principal clerks, "run with this parcel to the 'Blue Boar.'"

"No," says Horner. "No!" asked the astonished clerk; and in a deeper tone, "No," replied John.

This may be called impudence in John; we rather think it good policy, and will illustrate the wisdom of Horner by a short story.

It happened that two gentlemen, whose high profession was the display of the passions, or as they themselves would have said, "the holding the mirror up to nature," etc., etc., met in a parlour to arrange the business of the coming season. A compliment was paid to Mr. Tobin, by the selection of *The Honeymoon* as the first drama of the session. The gentleman who seemed to be the "better wisdom" of the two ran through the list of characters, coupling them with their several representatives. At length the manager came to *Lopez*, a part of minor dignity. "Let me see," said the manager— "oh, yes, Mizzlehurst will play *Lopez*." "Never, never; depend upon't you'll never induce him to do that. *Lopez*! he'll never do it," vouched the second gentleman. "Yes, yes," said the manager; "I'll arrange it. I'll talk him into it," and Mizzlehurst was written down for *Lopez*. The manager next proceeded to allot the characters in the farce; all of which he settled to his satisfaction, except the *Servant*, a part of three lines. "Of course," cried the manager, discovering at last his man, "Mizzlehurst will play

the *Servant*." "Hang it! he play the servant!—*Lopez*, though that is something below him, perhaps he may do; but the *Servant*!—why, it's only three lines," said the gentleman. "Very true," replied the manager, "very true; but don't you see, my dear fellow, if I can only persuade Mizzlehurst to go a little down, to play *Lopez*, I can *make* him play the *Servant*." Now, John Horner was one of those men who, once well-placed, owe their future success to never consenting to "play *Lopez*."

It may be remembered that John did not arrive in London in the proper predicament of genius: no, he had some fifteen guineas in his possession, which, he solemnly promised himself, should increase and multiply, no matter how. This resolution he carried into the office of Mr. Thiselton, where he speedily acquired—if it be an acquisition,—for our part, we think it an inborn faculty—the best knowledge for the improvement of his capital. He, of course, began with the humility of small funds, but time and success gave him confidence in his talent and his money.

By degrees, Andrew Thiselton—whether from the caprice of growing years, or whether, as his wife would have insinuated, from natural stubbornness of heart, we will not say—but certainly, by degrees, Andrew became less kind to John, his now third clerk. To be sure, Andrew—possibly in consequence of the wickedness charged upon him by his wife, was less successful than heretofore in his speculations: and he remembered that he hardly ever returned to the office, fevered, flustered by a loss, that he did not see John Horner in the best possible humour, all smiles and self-satisfaction.

"Humph! Mr. Horner—well I—zounds!" Such were the incoherent words of the stockbroker, as he returned from 'Change to his office one winter's evening.

"It *is* very cold, Sir," said Horner, poking the fire; "and I'm afraid, Sir, the frost affects your leg." It was very strange, but Horner never lost an opportunity of alluding to that accident, for the which Mr. Nehemiah Sackcloth had written such a beautiful thanksgiving.

"My leg! humph—yes—ha! if things go on in this manner, I shall want legs, for there will be no standing such luck. Sold again, when I should have bought. Why, Mr. Horner—yes, Sir, I can't help saying it—you always seem mightily pleased when I lose."

"I, Sir? Oh, Sir!" said John, and again he poked the fire. The truth is, John really deserved great praise for his modesty. Had he owned his satisfaction, he must have confessed that though his master had lost by selling, his clerk, with superior sagacity, had gained by buying. This, however, John cared not to publish, trusting to chance to conceal or reveal the matter to Andrew Thiselton.

"I am sorry, Sir—very sorry, if you think me no longer worthy of your esteem." Such was the speech of John Horner to his master, on the following morning. "And therefore, Sir, with many thanks, I hope I may be allowed to leave you."

"Very well," said Andrew Thiselton.

"Thank you, Sir," said his disappointed clerk, and he could have severed his tongue that gave the warning; for John only wished to show his spirit and not his heels to his master.

For some months John seemed to be out of employment; we say seemed, for, though he had no apparent occupation, his brain was continually working. Massaniello protested, on his elevation, that his head became full of boiling lead: the head of John Horner worked with boiling gold. It was July, and John Horner, now some five-and-twenty years old,

lay on the beach, looking at the sea, and thinking of his wealth to come. Yes, John had slipped from London to make holiday with nature ; he had travelled to the shores of Kent, to soothe and purify his spirit from the moil and smoke of city life. And as he lay upon the beach, love—yes, love—wanted on the strand. But very different was the Cupid of John Horner to the Cupid of the poets. John's little god had neither bow nor arrows : but in either chubby hand he bore a bag, and chinking metal kept time to his dancing. John's Cupid pointed to no rose-decked bower—no green and odorous nook, with ringdoves cooing among the boughs, but to a most substantial freehold of fine red brick, with gardens, orchard, fish-ponds, arable land, outhouses, and all that makes this vale of tears inhabitable. At the time whereof we write, this "desirable residence" was the property of a virgin lady named Ruth Thompson, who, in the disposal of some portion of her wealth, had employed Mr. Thiselton, and thus afforded a fine exercise to the native perseverance of John Horner. Briefly, John knew the amount of Ruth's property to the last shilling. Now, by a strange accident which sometimes favours the adoring, Miss Thompson happened to be at Ramsgate at the very time John lay upon the beach. In those days Ramsgate was a more sequestered spot than in these stirring times—it was then a retreat, and not a rendezvous. For two hours did John look upon the sea, and then he got upon his legs as a man determined. John walked onward, and at length paused at a neat lodging-house ; he coughed for resolution, and then knocked. In few words, he was ushered into the presence of Miss Thompson, who, with her bosom friend, Miss Whitney—for Joseph Sackcloth, to his great repugnance, had been compelled by his creditors to leave that blossom still unplucked—was engaged, like Penelope,

at work. There sat the two maids, and had John been poetical, they must have suggested to his mind the

“ —knot of cowslips on the *cliff*,
Not to be come at by the willing hand.”

Miss Whitney had a particular friendship for Miss Thompson, although she was even much plainer than herself; indeed, her regard was so great that she never liked to stir abroad without Ruth.

“ Well, Mr. Horner—sit down, pray—so, how does that reprobate brother of mine get on ? ” asked Miss Whitney.

“ You are aware, Madam, that I have no further business with Mr. Thiselton, except my good wishes,” said Horner.

“ Yes, yes ; I know. Well, I only pray, for the sake of those who trust him, that his heart may be turned,” and Miss Whitney proceeded stitching.

“ My dear, you know he’s my broker,” said Miss Thompson. “ I hope there is nothing suspicious—nothing——”

“ My dear Ruth, how can any man hope to prosper who has his dinner cooked on a Sunday ? ” asked Miss Whitney.

“ But you always dine with him on the Sabbath ! ” said Ruth, a little unconsciously.

“ Where’s the green silk ? ” asked Miss Whitney.

“ Here it is,” said John Horner, picking it from the floor, and gracefully extending it to Miss Whitney, who smiled more than ordinarily. As the maidens sat, like *Helena* and *Hermia*—

“ —with their needles creating both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,”

John Horner paused, and a feeling very like that which is said to possess the breast of a certain domestic creature of the feline race, happily placed in a warehouse of delicate viands, shot into the breast of our hero. Simply, for the

moment, John knew not which to choose. A slight incident—of what cobwebs are love's strong fetters made!—decided him.

"Can you thread a needle, Mr. Horner?" asked Miss Thompson, with an expression of arch ugliness. John smiled at the waggish question, and, with a roguish air, advanced to try the novel experiment. Miss Whitney looked a little surprised as John took the small instrument from the fingers of Miss Thompson, and essayed to thread.

"Captain White," said the servant, and just as the captain entered the room, John Horner accomplished his delicate task, and bowing, returned the needle to Miss Thompson.

Captain White was a man of about five feet two, with the symmetry of a mile-stone. He rolled one eye at John, for the military discipline he had laid upon himself, together with a bale of cravat, prevented his turning his neck. The captain had three recommendations to the heart of Miss Thompson: he was a tanner of extensive practice—he held a post in the Middlesex militia—and he was the best whist-player, as she, with woman's fondness, said, in all the world. This, his last accomplishment, Miss Thompson had kept from Miss Whitney, who abhorred cards—an aversion which Ruth publicly manifested, though in her heart she loved a little loo.

Captain White condescended to raise himself upon his toes, and inflating himself with an airiness of manner, he approached the ladies, and laid his broad hand upon their embroidered work. "Beautiful—very beautiful—what is it?—who is it for?"

"A favourite of mine," said Miss Thompson.

"Indeed!" said the captain, and he showed the ruins of his teeth. "And what may it be?"

"You will see in good time," said Miss Whitney.

"Why, they're laurel leaves you're working, eh?" asked the captain, his military habits assisting him in the discovery.

"To be sure," replied Miss Thompson, and she laughed.

"And for a favourite, eh?" And the captain threw his hands behind him, drew himself up, and blew out his face into a smile. "A favourite?"

"You'll see how well it will look," said Miss Whitney.

"Can it look otherwise from such fingers?" asked the gallant captain. "But, ladies, are you for a walk?"

The ladies answered in the affirmative by immediately rising, and, having slightly curtsied to John Horner, retiring into the adjoining apartment. John Horner, somewhat abashed, was about to quit the room; he had reached the door, when the captain, with a voice of authority and a look of defiance, said—"Don't do that again, Sir."

"Do what, Sir?" asked John, very mildly.

"I found you threading Miss Thompson's needle. That's a liberty, Sir," and the captain grew broader.

"A liberty!" said John.

"Blood, Sir—blood has been shed for a smaller freedom."

"I see no freedom—I——"

"Perhaps not, Sir; you may have no sense of refined honour—but when I tell you, Sir, that Miss Thompson will very speedily become Mrs. Captain White, I think you will feel it prudent not to repeat the insult."

"Mrs. Captain——"

"Yes, Sir; I think there can be little doubt of a lady's choice of a gentleman, when she is discovered embroidering his waistcoat."

John thought so too; and Miss Thompson's freehold dissolved in mist before him. John made no answer, but

descended the stairs, the captain calling from above—"Don't do that again, Sir."

John's melancholy was evanescent, for above his ruined hopes of Miss Thompson, there glowed the smiling face of Miss Whitney. Again and again John brought to his mind's eye the gracious looks of the gentle sempstress; hence, he remained some days at Ramsgate, dogging Miss Whitney in her walks, and, indeed, proceeding very far into the fortress of her heart. She at first thought of the disparity of their relative situations, but then what she had in money John wanted in years. As John advanced in the affections of Miss Whitney, the captain became less ferocious. Days passed on, the embroidery proceeded, and the captain—like a new butterfly—exulted in the thoughts of his waistcoat, when the vanity, or the hopes, of the lover received a rebuke which, well considered, has its moral.

The two pair of lovers strolled on the beach—and the sun was sinking in the western way—and "the gentleness of heaven was on the sea"—and the ocean murmured as with sea-nymph melodies—and all things brought sweet tranquillity to the heart of man, when the captain thought of his waistcoat. He was about to touch upon the interesting subject, when Miss Thompson, having turned her head, observed—"There, captain, there's my favourite—I told you how well he'd look in it." Captain White turned and saw——

Yet a word. People are never so humane as when they visit the sea-side. The town of Ramsgate had long been shamed by the cruelty of its indigenous ass-drivers. At last a man of a benevolent mind brought new asses to the town; they bore in their sleek coats and happy countenances irresistible evidence of the soft-heartedness of their

master. This was not lost upon the gentle bosoms of the visitors; and several ladies instantly resolved to shame the cruel into mercy, by affixing a distinguishing mark of their approbation of the man on the man's beasts. Thus, when Captain White turned his head, he saw the embroidery, which he fondly hoped would grace his waistcoat, decking the saddle-cloth of an eater of thistles! He had dreamt that Miss Thompson worked for him—for him, who would have prized the gift more than the heart it covered! Alas, she had cast away her thoughts—her hours—her best accomplishments, on an insensible—an unregarding ass! That woman—pretty woman—should ever so mistake!

Captain White bit his lip and frowned at his dumb rival with more than mortal hatred. Poor wretch! he was rather the object of pity than of hate. The embroidered saddle-cloth brought him a constant burden: and while other asses, with empty saddles, cropt their meal in quiet, the ass with the finery was selected from his brethren by all riders. Never did the benevolence of a master cause so many burdens to be laid upon his beast!

However, the captain was somewhat soothed for his loss of the waistcoat by the yielding sweetness of Miss Thompson, who on the same evening fixed the happy day. Miss Whitney—merely to keep her friend company—consented to make one in the ceremony with Mr. Horner. The solemnity, it was agreed, should be gone through as privately as possible. The day arrived, and Miss Thompson became Mrs. Captain White. An accident—an unlooked-for calamity—deferred the union of John Horner and Miss Whitney; for only the previous evening he received intelligence of the mortal sickness of his mother, who wished to bless him ere she died, and—what could a son do?—with heart-strings torn to pieces, he quitted

Ramsgate for Hampshire—left a bridal couch for the death-bed of his parent. Poor Miss Whitney! she was especially unfortunate; for, by a luckless coincidence, the day before the departure of John—her beloved John—Mr. Thiselton, involved in a rash speculation—we know not whether roast mutton on Sundays had called down the evil—lost not only all his own fortune, but all his sister's. A poor forty pounds a year was all that was gathered from the ruin. A wooden memorial in a churchyard in Wales informs posterity that Margaret Whitney died a virgin at the ripe age of eighty-four!

CHAPTER VII.

JOHN HORNER quietly, but surely, continued to pick out the plums of life, and at thirty-eight he was a most respectable man—a householder—and a person of some consideration in the vestry. To fill up his leisure hours he had accepted an office under the crown. Indeed, he held one of the most important offices of government—we may say, the most important. He was the collector of taxes due to his Majesty for the proper support and dignity of the State. John Horner felt the weight, the delicacy of his place—and was wont to talk to the procrastinating parishioners about the "solemn compact" between the tax-payer and the crown. The last man to be cheated, he would say, is the king: we think so too. There was, John would insist, a moral duty implied in the payment of a rate: constructive treason in the vain attempt to avoid it. "Soldiers and sailors bleed," John would observe, "what remains for us but to pay?" These stern ideas of public duty John had

still further strengthened by a perusal of an abridgment of the Roman history. He was also particularly learned in his knowledge of the value of Roman money ; and would at times astonish the ignorant with the words, *sestertius*, *denarius*. It was, moreover, alleged against him—but we think the accusation was the fruit of his envy—that he had written a tragedy on the Jugurthian war ; a tragedy, it was averred by John, very similar to Mr. Addison's *Cato*, inasmuch as it contained precisely the same number of lines. John, having assured himself an independence, could now afford to dally with the graces of life : it was not that he had a violent passion for them, but they implied a gentility in their admirer, and nothing was more easy than to admire.

John remained a bachelor ; he sometimes thought of Miss Margaret Whitney—the poor human vegetable in Wales—and then he thought how shocking it was that she had lost her money. Indeed, in his moments of confidence, John would tell his married acquaintance that they little knew what it was to be disappointed in love : for John, as he grew older and richer, did not dislike the interesting reputation, falling to a man of blighted hopes in the way of the fair sex. As John approached forty he began to learn the meaning of the word sentiment ; and made very frequent use of the discovery. Hence, John—in his middle age—was a favourite with widows and elderly spinsters ; who allowed him to have a taste—and, indeed, to exercise it in many little commissions. Yes, John became the pet of a tea-table ; and the merits of no new play were decided upon until Mr. Horner had given judgment. The Sunday's sermon was as rigidly criticised by John, as have been the books of Ariosto. Not, be it understood, that he suffered such matters to interfere with the graver concerns of life.

No—John knew what was due to society, and to the most important person in it—himself.

And thus John proceeded in his earthly pilgrimage. If the reader feel any disappointment at the absence of stirring and exciting events in the life of John Horner, we must remind him that they do not belong to the Horner species; we have written the quiet, subtle, plodding life of a picker of plums; and do not profess to give the history of a military hero. Our biography is that of the mole, and not of the lion: of the mouse who bites the net—not of the beast that roars and struggles in it.

We have endeavoured to show the reader how John Horner obtained a taste for the refinements of life. He liked books, pictures, music,—as some people like olives, for the gentility of the thing. He would have fallen into admiration with a work of Correggio's, the instant he could afford to buy it: however, having bought the veriest daub, he would protest it to be worth all the world beside, simply because it was his. John Horner would enter a pig-stye; and he being there, and calling it his own, the pig-stye would become a Grecian temple. Though he picked bad currants, they became raisins of the sun.

John, in the course of his profession, arrived at a pretty correct knowledge of the fortunes of the people in his district. There were three widows of almost equal property, and John was puzzled. Unhappily, polygamy was not allowed by the English law, and whatever John's benevolent intentions might be, the institutions of his country restricted him to one wife at a time.

It was an evening in cold November, and John's old housekeeper had had strict orders to put everything in the nicest condition. There was evidently something in the mind of the master of the dwelling; for though he tried to

sit in an easy, careless attitude, he would every now and then rise and go to the windows, and look out on the black night; then return, and poke the fire, and then sit down, and run his fingers over the keys of a spinnet, albeit he knew no more of music than the cat upon the rug. The table was covered with books of light poetry, some pictures, and a few pieces of china, besides two silver snuff-boxes presented to Mr. Horner as testimonies of his rectitude as the secretary of a benefit society, and his conduct as a vestryman, every one of the body having similarly complimented themselves. Horner was dressed in a very rich morning gown, and his hair was not half-an-hour from the hands of the barber. What could Mr. Horner be after? thought the housekeeper.

A hackney-coach drove to the door,—and, in an instant, the knocker loudly summoned Mr. Horner's man.

"Is the tax-gatherer at home?" asked a lady in an angry and impatient voice.

"Will you step into his office, Ma'am?" said Luke. The lady complied with the request, and Mr. Horner, being summoned by his man, crossed the passage and entered his office.

"Well, Sir!"—exclaimed the lady as her eye caught the coming tax-gatherer.

"Bless me!" cried Horner, in the liveliest astonishment. "What,—Mrs. White!"

"Yes, Sir, Mrs. White! And I am come to ask the reason of this impertinence——"

"Impertinence!" said Horner, very innocently. "My dear Mrs. White——"

"Don't dear me, Sir—dear forsooth! Had the captain been still alive, he'd have shaken you out of your shoes."

"Really, Madam—I—if I have offended—what is the matter?" asked Horner.

"The matter! Ask your man, if he is your man," said Mrs. White, with the most ingenuous contempt.

"Luke—what is the meaning of this?" and Horner turned fiercely round upon his servant.

"I don't know, Sir," replied Luke.

"Don't know!" exclaimed the Widow White—"pray, fellow, what message did you leave at my house this morning?"

"I left only what my master told me," said Luke.

"What I told you!" asked Horner, wonderingly.

"Yes, about the taxes. I left word that if Mrs. White didn't send the money for his Majesty," Luke had caught the magniloquent style of his master when touching on taxes, "this evening, that you'd distrain."

"Yes, told my footman that you'd put a man in," said the widow.

"You did?" asked, or rather shouted John Horner.

"Yes, Sir; and when I told him so, the footman laughed, and asked if you couldn't make it a woman," and Luke grinned.

"And is it thus, Sir, that you insult wealthy and loyal parishioners—ladies, who know what is due to the crown?" said Horner.

"I only told 'em what you told me to say," urged Luke in defence.

"// But this is the second time—leave my house, Sir—this instant—be gone—I won't hear a word—that a lady like Mrs. White—a lady whose character for all that is just, punctual, and benevolent—take your box, fellow, and be gone." Vain was it for Luke to attempt a reply; sentence of discharge was pronounced, and Horner was inexorable. Mrs. White, though not naturally severe, smiled commendation on the energy of Mr. Horner.

"I believe, Madam, there is a family a few doors from you of the name of Knight—shocking people—I only hope they aren't Jacobins; but they take no pleasure in paying taxes, and it was to them I sent the message, which——"

"I felt there must be some mistake, and, after a minute's thought, I was resolved to come and have it cleared up myself," said Mrs. White.

"Though I regret the incivility of my man, if you will pardon my saying it, I can hardly be sorry for any cause that brings Mrs. White to my humble roof. But the office is cold—will you step into——"

"Not at all—there, Sir," and Mrs. White laid down, as Horner would have said, the money for the monarch, and asked for a receipt.

"Bless me! It is some years, Mrs. White, since you and I met," said Horner, "and yet to look in your face, Mrs. White, it doesn't seem as many weeks. Really, the office is cold."

"It *is* a little cold," said Mrs. White, and immediately followed Horner into his parlour. The widow had no sooner entered the circle of the enchanter than she seemed to feel his influence. There was a propriety—a comfort—a taste in the apartment so rare to be met with in the abodes of bachelors.

"Well, it's very odd," said Mrs. White, "but only on Tuesday, I had a dream about poor dear Miss Whitney."

"Hem!" said John, "it was a pity she was of so melancholy a temper. For my part, I had an esteem——"

"Oh, Mr. Horner, it's a good thing her heart didn't break, or her ghost would certainly have haunted you," said Mrs. White smilingly.

Horner smiled too; then said—"The truth is, Mrs.

White, our hearts were not, I found, made to pair ; she—she hadn't taste."

"Dear me, how it pours !—I hope the coach——"

"The coachman—oh—he wouldn't stay,"—Horner had, by means of his housekeeper, discharged him,—“but Deborah can soon get another.”

"Well, then, if you will write the receipt, Mr. Horner."

"To be sure, my dear Mrs. White—the pen and ink are only in the other room. Why—now, that's very odd ; how very strange !"

"What, Mr. Horner ?"

"Very strange, that the song—'*My lodging is on the cold ground*,'—that song which I heard you sing so beautifully at Ramsgate, should be lying uppermost of the heap. That song you used to sing to the captain."

"I recollect—ha ! how time flies !—how soon, Mr. Horner, one's singing days go over !"

"The true nightingale, Mrs. White," and John moved his chair towards her, and repeated the words, "the true nightingale never gets old."

Mrs. White, with the modest perception of a woman, changed the subject. "You have a nice, comfortable house here, Mr. Horner ?"

"Cold—dull—and miserable," sighed Horner. "I sometimes wish I had been a Papist."

"Lord !" exclaimed the lady in considerable alarm. "What for ?"

"That I might have sold off all I had, and turned monk. It is a woman, Madam, who gives life and warmth to a house."

"My receipt, Mr. Horner," said the widow languidly.

"Who gives the last grace—the last comfort—whose taste—well, I declare, now, if that isn't odd," and Horner

smiled benignantly at Tib, the cat, who at that moment leapt from the rug into the lap of the widow. "Would you believe it, Mrs. White, Tib never did that to a stranger before." Mrs. White smiled and patted Tib. "Never to anybody before. Well, Sir," and Horner chucklingly addressed the cat—"you seem quite at home. I'm sure, if you were his mistress, he couldn't be more at his ease. But perhaps he troubles you," and Horner stretched forth his arms to remove the intruder.

"Let him be," said Mrs. White, and again she patted Tib, who renewed a recognition of the patronage.

"Yes, Madam, I was saying——"

"The partridge is done," said Deborah, unceremoniously opening the door, whereupon Mr. Horner started to his feet, and Mrs. White, with a slight blush, shook the cat from her lap.

"Bring it up," said Horner.

"The receipt, Mr. Horner—I really had no notion it was so late—I——"

"You must stay and take a bit of partridge," said John, and a sudden gust of wind, and a splash of rain at the window, in good time seconded his eloquence.

"They'll think I'm lost," said Mrs. White, and she untied her bonnet.

The partridge was served. "I declare I'm robbing you of your supper, Mr. Horner," said the widow.

"I don't know how it is, but I have not the slightest appetite—you must have the breast—I couldn't eat a bird of paradise."

"But when it's plain the bird was cooked for yourself," said the unconscious Mrs. White—"now you shall eat a bit."

"It must be a leg, then," and John helped himself to the

scanty limb, and continued to cut atoms of flesh from the bone, chewing and looking with fixed eyes upon the widow.

"Past ten o'clock," cried the watchman without, and Mrs. White sprang from her seat, declaring she hadn't thought it eight, and insisted upon a coach. Deborah was despatched for a vehicle, and John Horner, sighing, very profoundly assisted the lady into it. The door was closed, and the horses about to start, when John exclaimed—"Dear me! you have forgotten the receipt."

"And so I have," said Mrs. White,—and then in the softest tone, "would it be too much trouble, Mr. Horner, for you to drop in with it to-morrow?" The coachman, anticipating Horner's consent, drove off.

Mr. Horner, as a middle-aged man, was a man of gallantry. He therefore failed not the next day to call on Mrs. White with her receipt in full: he called again and again, until more than one neighbour remarked, that the State ought to be much beholden to Mrs. White, for surely she paid more to the king than half the parish put together. Ere another quarter's taxes were due, Mrs. White was Mrs. Horner!

John retired with his wife to an old and spacious country seat. The late Captain White had been very prosperous as a tanner; two or three distant relations had, moreover, died on purpose as it seemed to leave him their money; hence, John Horner, with the plums he had picked himself, and the fruit he obtained with the relict of the captain, achieved that enviable distinction so ardently yearned for by the many—he died rich. A hymn was composed for his funeral—and a marble monument covered his remains. He died, says his epitaph—full of hope; to the which history may add—and full of plums.

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